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CUADROS DE EL SALVADOR

Por DESIDERIO BOLIVAR

HACE más o menos dos meses que tuve la oportunidad de viajar a mi país natal, El Salvador. Conciente del trabajo activo de la LSR en el movimiento centroamericano y dado mi apoyo y respeto por las ideas de la LSR, me gustaría compartir mi experiencia de dos semanas en ese país demolido por años de opresión imperialista por EU y su clase local, por la represión militar y últimadamente por nueve años de guerra civil.

Dentro de la izquierda en este país, la LSR se ha distinguido por su posición muy singular. Por un lado, esta organización apoya y desea el triunfo del FMLN en cuanto que tal triunfo representaría una victoria en contra del imperialismo de EU. Por otro lado, la LSR es crítica del FMLN en cuanto que en el caso de que llegara a derrocar el gobierno presente, no establecería socialismo verdadero o socialismo como la LSR lo entiende.

Desde que he conocido a la LSR yo me he adherido a su punto de vista y análisis con respecto a las luchas de liberación en Centroamerica. Basado en estas creencias, me gustaría acertar cual sería el resultado posible de la lucha salvadoreña.

Pero de acuerdo a mi observación limitada y personal, yo considero que la situación politica de El Salvador es realmente desconcertante y a veces parece eludir todo tipo de predicción. Desde el punto de vista popular, a uno le da la sensación de que el daño material y humano es tan tremendo que ha causado tal grado de impaciencia, falta de esperanza, apatía social y muchas otras formas de conducta social que pueden afec-

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LUCHA DE CLASE EN POLONIA

Por CHRIS HOBSON

A MEDIADOS DE agosto, por la segunda vez en cuatro meses, trabajadores polacos organizaron una ola amplia de huelgas. A su ápice, trabajadores cerraron 11 minas de carbón en la región del carbón en el sur del país, facilidades de puerto y transporte en Szczecin en el noroeste, y facilidades de astillero y de puerto en Gdańsk. Durante el trastorno, Bob McGlynn y yo viajamos a Polonia y obtuvimos una vislumbre directa de esta lucha importante.

Las huelgas tenían a la vez un aspecto económico y un aspecto político. Económicamente, la demanda mayor era de por salarios más grandes para compensar para inflación galopante. Según los estadísticos oficiales, los precios en Polonia están subiendo el 60% por año; las cifras verdaderas probablemente serían más altas. Pero a las demandas económicas se les juntó rápidamente la demanda por la relegalización de Solidarność.

Durante la segunda semana de las huelgas, el gobierno envió a tropas de milicia contra los mineros. Recobraron la mayoría de las minas, pero algunos mineros se cerraron con barricadas dentro de los pozos y comenzó un alejamiento. El gobierno también envió a tropas de milicia contra los trabajadors de puerto y de transporte en Szczecin, pero ya continuaba la huelga. Cuando la mayoría de las huelgas de los mineros de carbón habían sido represadas, el centro de la lucha cambió al norte y a la demanda por la relegalización de Solidarność. Los líderes de Solidarność acerca de Lech Walesa empezaron de insistir de que la relegalización — aun negociaciones con el gobierno sobre la relegalización en el futuro — fue el uno paso necesario para terminar la crisis.

El 26 de agosto, el ministro del interior de Polonia, el General Czeslaw Kiszczak, apareció en la TV para ofrecer "negociaciones de mesa redonda" con la oposición. Cinco días más tarde, Walesa ganó de Kiszczak una promesa de que el gobierno discutiría alguna forma de relegalización en el futuro. Armado con solamente esta promesa, Walesa llamó por la terminación de las huelgas.

Sí que se terminaron las huelgas, pero Walesa necesitó ocho horas de oraciones y discusiones en los astilleros de Gdańsk para convencer a los trabajadores. En la reúnion de toda la noche (el 31 de agosto–el 1 de septiembre), trabajadores abucheaban y silbaban a Walesa, quejándose de que él estaba pidiéndoles de salir del astillero y de ceder su arma de huelga, sin ganar nada concreta en cuanto a la relegalización y nada cualquiera en cuanto a los salarios y sus otras

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Un Examen del Leninismo

El Estado y La Revolución

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Nos gustaría que nuestros lectores escribieran para **La Antorcha**. Es necesario que recibamos material para la próxima edición para el viernes el 4 de noviembre de 1988, a menos que se hagan arreglos específicos. Gracias.

Artículos firmados no representan necesariamente los puntos de vista de **La Antorcha** o la Liga Socialista Revolucionaria.

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El Salvador

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tar el resultado de la lucha de pueblo salvadoreño.

El primo tipo de reacción que uno experimenta de alguien que ha vivido en El Salvador durante los últimos diez años es de cansancio y desamparo. Es muy evidente que todos los sectores de la población están hastiados de la guerra: el pueblo, la extrema derecha, la democracia cristiana y uno supone el FMLN también.

La derecha propone una solución del conflicto que significaría el aniquilamiento completo del FMLN sin escatimar una masacre de la población civil que vive en los territorios controlados por la guerrilla. De acuerdo a la derecha, la culpa por el estado añejado de la guerra la tiene la democracia cristiana y el Congreso de EU. Los democratascristianos proponen que el FMLN se rinda por completo. El FMLN por su parte busca una solución en la cual se forme un gobierno de coalición que incluye sus fuerzas. Y el pueblo, que no necesariamente se identifica con ninguna de estas fuerzas, y que es el que esta sufriendo la devastación del país, simplemente no tiene ningún tipo de participación. Su única opción es la de votar por la extrema derecha o por los democratascristianos que hasta el momento únicamente tipifican los intereses de EU.

En las elecciones de diputados para la Asamblea Legislativa del 20 de marzo, ARENA y las fuerzas combinadas de la derecha ganaron 30 asientos de un total de 60 de la Asamblea. Concientes de la asociación estrecha entre ARENA y las escuadrones de la muerte, da un poco de miedo y es difícil de entender el porque del apoyo para ARENA. Pero en realidad, más que apoyo para nadie, el resultado de dichas elecciones demuestra falta de alternativas viables asi como disatisfacción con la inabilidad de la democracia cristiana de producir reformas sociales y económicas verdaderas. Por otro lado, ello representa el grado máximo de impaciencia con la guerra.

Para mí, uno de los aspectos más desconcertantes de la situación en El Salvador es el grado de alienación política que sufre la mayoría de la gente. Con la excepción de la iglesia, el gobierno y el FMLN, ningún otro sector se encuentra participando en el discurso político del país. No hay sindicatos de obreros u organizaciones de campesinos cuya participación se constituya como esencial entre las fuerzas contendientes.

La iglesia, la cual se ha mantenido en contacto con la gente, se ha limitado o se limita a jugar un papel puramente diplimático entre el FMLN y el gobierno. Y este sector de la iglesia quizas es el más conservador que siempre haya existido. La iglesia liberal que en el pasado expresaba el sentimiento popular ha sido exterminada por el gobierno así como la jerarquía eclesial misma.

En las escuelas, desde los grados primarios hasta el bachillerato, el hablar de la guerra es algo que no tiene cabida. Al mismo tiempo, me da la impresión de que en los centros universitarios, con la excepción de la Universidad Nacional de San Salvador, la situación del país es algo que no se discute. Dos estundiantes de bachillerato de distintas escuelas me decían que no recordaban que alguna vez se hubiera mencionado algo sobre la situación política del país. Ciertamente, este silencio es sin duda el resultado del miedo infundido por años de represión, pero al mismo tiempo, a uno le da la impresión que es parte de la cultura creada por años de guerra.

La actitud descarada de los medios de comunicación es algo que vale la pena notar. Los dos periódicos principales (*El Diario de Hoy* y *La Prensa Gráfica*), dedican appróximadamente dos tercios de todo el periódico a eventos sociales: nacimientos, comuniones, bodas, agazajos, etc. Los titulares del día son acerca de eventos internacionales. Uno de las más populares que duro casi dos semanas fue la gran sequía en el occidente medio de EU. El mejor programa de entretenimiento, ademas de novelas, fue las finales de la NBA (Los Angeles Lakers vs. los Pistons de Detroit).

En la medida en que uno viaja en el país, uno se encuentra rodeado por el ejército, así como toda forma de destrucción. En cualquier viaje que no sea dentro de la misma ciudad o pueblo uno debe prepararse para ser detenido como mínimo tres veces, lo cual es comunmente llamado retenes. En cada retén uno tiene que presentar identificación personal y la mayoría de las veces ser registrado.

El grado de destrucción de la infraestructura causado por el sabotaje de FMLN complica aun más las vidas de la gente pobre. A mí me da la impresión que gran cantidad de gente entiende poco acerca de la guerra y mucho menos acerca de la destrucción, sobre todo de los caminos. En un país tan pequeño en el cual los productos de consumo diario, especialmente alimentos, depende de la abilidad misma de la gente para movilizarse y no de corporaciones como en EU, el daño a la infraestructura es algo que incomoda a la gente.

Pero a uno le gustaría saber que es lo que la gente piensa en realidad del FMLN. La única forma en que esto se puede saber es si uno vive en el país una buena cantidad de tiempo, o simplemente cree lo que lee en el exterior.

En la medida en que yo lo puedo constatar, esta es mi apreciación de lo que sucede en El Salvador y la fase a la cual se ha desarollado la situación. Tal como lo dije al principio, el intentar el hacerse una opinion de lo que sería el resultado posible de la guerra basado en alguna forma de expresión popular es casi imposible. El deterioro humano y material es inmensurable y aunque nosotros acá no nos conformenos con algo menos que verdadera liberación, y no debemos conformarnos con nada menos que eso, el pueblo salvadoreño parece estar destinado a aceptar cualquier cosa que simule tranquilidad.

Lucha en Polonia

(Continúa de la página 1)
demandas económicas. Aunque Walesa ganó su punto, los trabajadores se salieron con su orgullo y con su organización intacta.

En Jastrzebie, los trabajadores rehusaron de subir de los pozos hasta que viajó Walesa de Warsaw para explicarles personalmente el arreglo. Se necesitó 15 horas para convencer a los mineros a que terminaran su huelga. Otra vez, abuchearon a Walesa, y otra vez los huelgistas marcharon fuera de las minas en buen orden.

Desde que el gobierno había represado la mayoría de las huelgas, alguna clase de acómodo hubiera sido inevitable. Pero no este. Nuestros amigos en Gdańsk nos dijeron más tarde de que la mayoría de los trabajadores del astillero estaban "furiosos" y se sentían "traicionados" por el arreglo.

La razón original por que Bob y yo viajamos a Polonia fue de asistir a una Conferencia para Derechos Humanos sustenida en la ciudad en el sur del país, Kraków, acerca de las minas de carbón. La organizaron juntamente líderes de Solidarność y gente de Wolność i Pokój (WiP—Libertad y Paz), el movimiento de paz y de ecología que había auspiciado una conferencia semejante en Warsaw en 1987, a la cual yo asistí. De los dos grupos, Solidarność tiene más influencia política en Polonia, y ello más o menos controló la conferencia. Tanto como 1,500 personas se registraron, con quizás 500 dentro de la sala de conferencia en algún momento.

Por supuesto, la conferencia se ha planeado por meses y era solo una coincidencia que ocurió a mediados de una lucha importante de la clase obrera. Por mucho del tiempo, no se sabía de que tenia lugar la lucha. Tan como un evento dirigido burocráticamente, las presentaciones preplaneadas ocurieron mayormente como preplaneadas. Había un buen aspecto de esto, y un aspecto malo. El aspecto bueno fue que podíamos escuchar a un gran número de activistas de la mayoría de los paises de Europa del Este que nos informaron de las condiciones y luchas de sus paises. El aspecto malo fue que la conferencia hizo muy poco en cuanto a ayudar la lucha que estaba ocuriendo en los puertos y las minas. Un representante del Comité Interfábrica de Huelga de los trabajadores dirijo la palabra a la conferencia, y se distribuyó un llamado informacional, pero algunos intentos de organizar un viaje de solidaridad fracasaron. La policía, a quienes los organizadores de la conferencia pidieron de que autorizaran tal viaje, rehusaron y avisaron que "que cayeran en huecos" algunos visitantes si intentaban de hacer tal viaje. Mi impresión, pues, es que si WiP había actuado por sí mismo, habría ocurido el viaje—miembros de WiP y los del Occidente que estaban listos para arriesgar algún contratiempo con la policía simplemente habrían ido, y si habían ensayado de pararnos la policia, ¡que importa!

Si le gusta a Ud. lo que tenemos que decir, pongase en contacto con nosotros:

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¡CERREMOLO!

JUNTESE A LOS ANARQUISTAS AL BLOQUEO DEL PENTAGONO EL 17 DE OCTUBRE 1988

Mientras persiste la guerra en El Salvador, así como el movimiento para pararla continúa. Rondas de protesta que hacen estrías en el pavimiento, y organizadores que tratan de apaciguar nuestra resistencia han fracasado en detener la guerra.

Pero recientemente el movimiento ha ganado energía nueva. Durante una semana en marzo, el gobierno envió más tropas a Honduras, y miles de manifestantes nuevos, con una rabia nueva, salieron a las calles en respuesta. Muchos de nosotros somos jóvenes que nunca asistíamos antes a manifestaciones.

De repente nuestros ojos están abiertos. Somos una fuerza nueva contra la guerra. Nos vemos como la gente que va a revertir esta situación.

En El Salvador los EEUU apoyan un gobierno-de-escuadrones-de-la-muerte y el bombardeo de aldeas para suprimir una revolución. La guerra allá es solo un aspecto de una guerra mundial lanzada por los superpoderes contra la mayoría de la humanidad. Mientras los burócratas del Pentágona y el Kremlin planifican sus próximos pasos de guerra, ellos están protegiendo un sistema que está destruyendo el planeta ecológicamente. Es un sistema basado en el racismo, el sexismo, y la homofobia.

Este sistema le roba a casi todo el mundo, incluyendo a muchos de nosotros. Aunque muchos de nosotros vivamos una vida cómoda, a causa de la manera en que el capitalismo explota a otra gente, esto no implica que le tengamos ninguna lealtad. Nuestro "privilegio" significa crecer en una sociedad que llena nuestras vidas con estéreos, carros y televisión, pero a la vez pone nuestra imaginación y nuestro amor por nosotros mismos en una camisa de fuerza.

La situación es urgente. La contaminación y la muerte no paran ni por un segundo. Puede que caigan los misiles mientras usted está leyendo esta hoja. Pero con la determinación, podemos reemplazar las ruinas y el modelo autoritario de la dominación y la obediencia con una sociedad fundada y basada en la cooperación.

El Pentágono impide la construcción de una sociedad que valga. Representa el poder armado del puñado de hombres blancos y ricos que se benefician con la miseria del mundo. Sea el apartheid, la guerra en Centroamérica o las planes de lanzar y ganar una guerra nuclear, este edificio alberga a los estrategas del imperio.

Una coalición amplia de grupos (iniciada por la Plegaría de Resistencia y el Comité en Solidaridad con el Pueblo de El Salvador — CISPES) ha hecho una llamada por el bloqueo del Pentágono para lunes el 17 de octubre para expresar muestra ultraje por la guerra EEUU que sigue en El Salvador.

¿Por qué ir a Washington por otra manifestación? El Pentágono es la Central de la guerra. Un bloqueo allí les pega en las costillas a los guerreristas. Un bloqueo que dice ¡cerrémolo! — sin retroceder — prueba nuestra fuerza nueva y nos permite aprender como trabajar juntos.

¿Como podemos impulsar un cambio? Construyendo un movimiento con espíritu combativo que se arriesgue diariamente. Cada vez que uno de nosotros dice "NO" al imperialismo yanqui, está hablando en la misma voz que los Salvadoreños allá que ya están luchando. Podemos hacernos un movimiento fuerte. Podemos desafiar a la opresión en nuestras escuelas, nuestros trabajos y también en nuestras familias por el solo hecho de decir "NO" en esa misma voz. Es una vos que pertenece a todos nosotros.

GRUPO MAYDAY DE ANARQUISTAS

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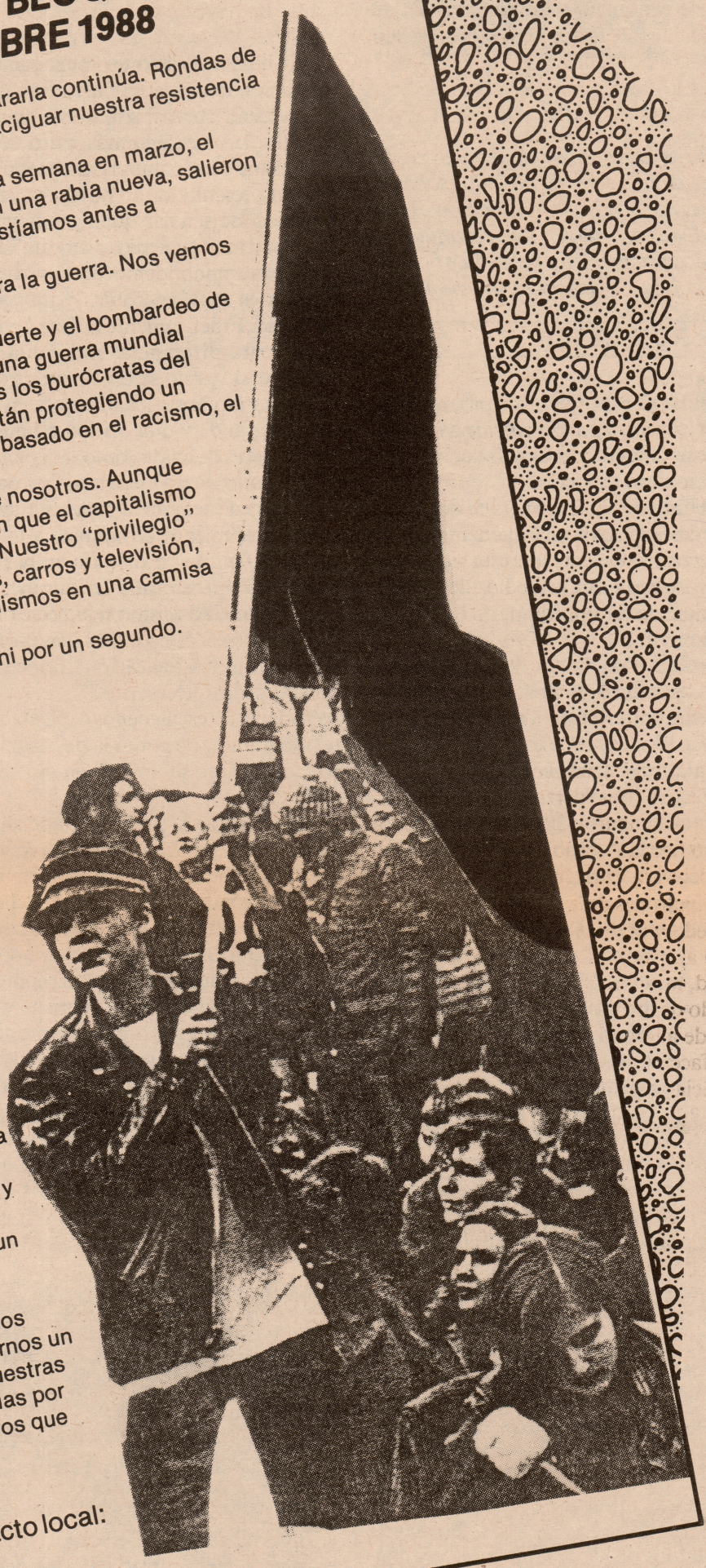


Para el 17 de octubre, una coalición iniciada por la Plegaría de Resistencia y el Comité en Solidaridad con en Pueblo de El Salvador está organizando un bloqueo del Pentágono. Reuniéndose como sección de la Asamblea para Sobrevivir anarquista, el Grupo ¡MayDay! de Anarquistas endosó un esfuerzo de organizar para esta acción por crear un contingente anarquista. Arriba está una llamada para ese contingente, en una forma que se puede recortar, llevar a una tienda para copias y reproducir (hay que reducirlo un poco). ¡Solo añada una dirección local! Para envolver su grupo local en el planimiento total, escriba a la dirección en Minneapolis la cual está inscripta en el volante de la llamada. En la área de Nueva York, uno puede escribir a Contingente Pentágono Anarquista, c/o NENW, 339 Lafayette St., room 202, New York, NY 10012.

Un Examen del Leninismo — El Estado y

Esta es la segunda mitad de la sexta parte de una serie de artículos sobre el leninismo/bolchevismo por Ron Taber. Estos artículos no representan necesariamente la posición oficial de la Liga Socialista Revolucionaria.

Por RON TABER

UNOS POCOS otros pasajes de *El Estado y La Revolución* ayudarán explicar la visión del estado/sociedad revolucionario de Lenin.

"Hasta que la fase más alta del comunismo llegue, los socialistas demandarán el *más estricto* control por la sociedad y *por el estado* sobre la medida del trabajo y la medida del consumo. . . ." (Enfasis en el original.)

De acuerdo a Lenin, "La cuestión vital y candente de la política *hoy dia*" es: "la expropiación de los capitalistas, la conversión de *todos* los ciudadanos en trabajadores y empleados de *un* gran sindicato — el estado entero. . . ."

Unas cuantas páginas más adelante Lenin predija: "Toda la sociedad se habrá convertido en una sola oficina y una sola fábrica. . . ."

Por supuesto, Lenin siempre enfatiza que el "control" debe de ser ejercitado "no por un estado de burócratas, sino que por un estado de *obreros armados*. . .," que el trabajo del "sindicato" debe ser completamente subordinado a un "estado genuinamente democrático, el estado de los Soviets de Diputados de los Trabajadores y Soldados," etc., etc.

Pero el punto discutido anteriormente acerca del sistema postal alemán se aplica aquí también. Si las instituciones de la sociedad revolucionaria, tales como la economía, son organizadas bajo lineamientos esencialmente burgueses (una fábrica inmensa, una oficina inmensa con capataces, contadores y técnicos burgueses), tal sociedad permanecerá burgués. Será únicamente cuestión de tiempo antes de que las relaciones sociales burgueses, continuamente reproducidas e inculcadas en el corazón de la sociedad, minarán el control de los "obreros armados" y de los "Soviets de Diputados de los Trabajadores y Soldados."

Al máximo, el control obrero del cual Lenin habla es totalmente externo al aparato. Pero si los obreros continúan viviendo, aun más importante, trabajando en un ambiente, en una estructura que es burgués, su propia actividad y su *conciencia* volverán a ser burgués. Aunque liberación social verdadera no se puede obtener de una vez, tampoco puede ser compartamentalizada.

Si que los obreros van a controlar la sociedad posrevolucionaria, ellos deben controlarla en todos los niveles, especialmente en los niveles inmediatos de sus propias vidas. Lenin parece creer que los obreros pueden continuar trabajando bajo condiciones esencialmente burgueses, mientras que al mismo tiempo ejercitan control sobre este aparato burgués. Esto es, a lo más, puro deseo.

Aunque pienso que el punto teorético ha sido presentado, no puedo resistir la tentación de señalar qué tipo de visión estos párrafos sugieren. Aunque Lenin habla en términos democráticos, su concepción es muy jerárquica y muy regimentada. Prácticamente no hay oportunidad para diferencias individuales y creatividad, ya no se diga para errores. Organizando la sociedad entera en una fábrica grande y una oficina grande, la liberación es definida como ser miembro disciplinado de un ejército industrial.

Esto va de acuerdo con la infatuación con el crecimiento económico y la modernización que yo discutía en la parte última de ser central a la idiosincracia bolchevique. Al mismo tiempo se dirige de una forma directa a la devoción de Stalin a la industrialización "por cualesquiera medios necesarios."

Todavía no es, al menos explícitamente, tan inhumano como la de Stalin, pero ciertamente se apunta en esa dirección.

Esto me trae al aspecto estadocapitalista siguiente en *El Estado y La Revolución* que quiero discutir acá. Este es el hecho que aunque Lenin habla del control de los obreros, de ganar la batalla por la democracia, del proletariado organizado como una clase gobernante, de unificar las funciones legislativas y ejecutivas en un cuerpo gobernante, etc., en ninguna parte en el libro se tiene la idea de que los obreros discutirán o decidirán que llevarán a cabo las *deciciones políticas*. Como máximo, Lenin parece pensar que después de la revolución, los asuntos afectando a los obreros serán mayormente administrativos.

> Contaduría y control — eso es principalmente lo que se necesita para la "operación fluida," para el funcionamiento propio, de la primera fase de la sociedad comunista.
>
> Cuando la *mayoría* de la gente comienza independientemente y en todas partes a mantener tales cuentas y a ejercitar tal control sobre los capitalistas (ahora convertidos en empleados) y sobre la gentileza intelectual los cuales preservan sus hábitos capitalistas, este control se convertirá verdaderamente en universal, general y popular. . . .
>
> Desde el momento en que todos los miembros de la sociedad, o al menos la gran mayoría, han aprendido a administrar el estado *ellos mismos*, han tomado este trabajo en sus propias manos, han organizado control sobre la minoría capitalista insignificante, sobre la gentileza que pretende mantener sus hábitos capitalistas y sobre los obreros los cuales han sido corrompidos completamente por el capitalismo — desde este momento la necesidad por un gobierno de cualquier clase comienza a desaparecer completamente. (Enfasis en original.)

A través de este relato extenso, y a través de *El Estado y La Revolución* en total, no hay mención de la necesidad de los obreros de hacer las *decisiones políticas*. Parece que el trabajo de los obreros es de oprimir o controlar los capitalistas del pasado, la gentileza, etc., y "mantener la contaduría." Estas son funciones básicamente administrativas. En cierto modo, las decisiones políticas, las discusiones políticas y el debate se encuentran ausente. Lenin parece asumir que a la vez que la dictadura del proletariado ha sido establecido, la discusión política — el debate político, el conflicto político, política como tal — ha sido trascendido. (Eso o que las decisiones políticas son reservadas exclusivamente para el partido revolucionario, los obreros de conciencia verdadera de clase.)

Tal como en mucho *El Estado y La Revolución* no es bien claro que la concepción de Lenin es democrática: él habla del control de los obreros, los obreros administrando el estado, un estado de los obreros armados, etc., etc., pero la substancia, el contenido — los obreros directa e inmediatamente dirigiendo la sociedad, los obreros y no la burguesía y los líderes políticos haciendo las decisiones políticas y económicas — simplemente no está allí.

Cuestión del partido omitida

Esto ayuda explicar uno de los aspectos más destacados de *El Estado y La Revolución*, en este caso una omisión. No hay discusión sobre el partido revolucionario en esta obra, no se diga de un sistema multipartidista. Yo creo que esto es muy significante.

Después de todo, Lenin gastó la mayoría de su vida como adulto tratanto de construir un partido revolucionario. El construir tal partido fue *la* tarea estratégica central de los revolucionarios cerca de llevar a cabo una revolución de clase obrera exitosa. De hecho, la existencia de tal partido era, para Lenin, la *condición necesaria* para que tal revolución tuviese éxito.

Más aun, es el partido revolucionario, tal como lo recordaremos, que es la fuente y la garantía de la conciencia revolucionaria. Sin la existencia del partido, escribió Lenin en *¿Que hacer?*, la clase obrera puede alcanzar únicamente a conciencia sindicalista, reformista. El omitir una discusión del partido revolucionario en una obra de este tipo por parte de Lenin quiere decir algo.

Lenin y su Consejo de Comisarios del Pueblo.

Sexta Parte / Segunda Mitad

La Revolución

Entre otras, hay dos explicaciones plausibles para esto. Primero, Lenin sentía que el partido revolucionario continuaría existiendo y dirigiendo a los obreros. En realidad, su autoridad no puede ser disputada, viendo el éxito de la revolución, etc. Segundo, Lenin sentía que el partido no se necesitaría y que se disolvería.

Yo creo personalmente que la primera explicación es la más probable. Dada la concepción total de Lenin de conciencia y liderazgo, yo no creo que él pudo haber concebido de una dictadura del proletariado sin el "papel principal" del partido revolucionario.

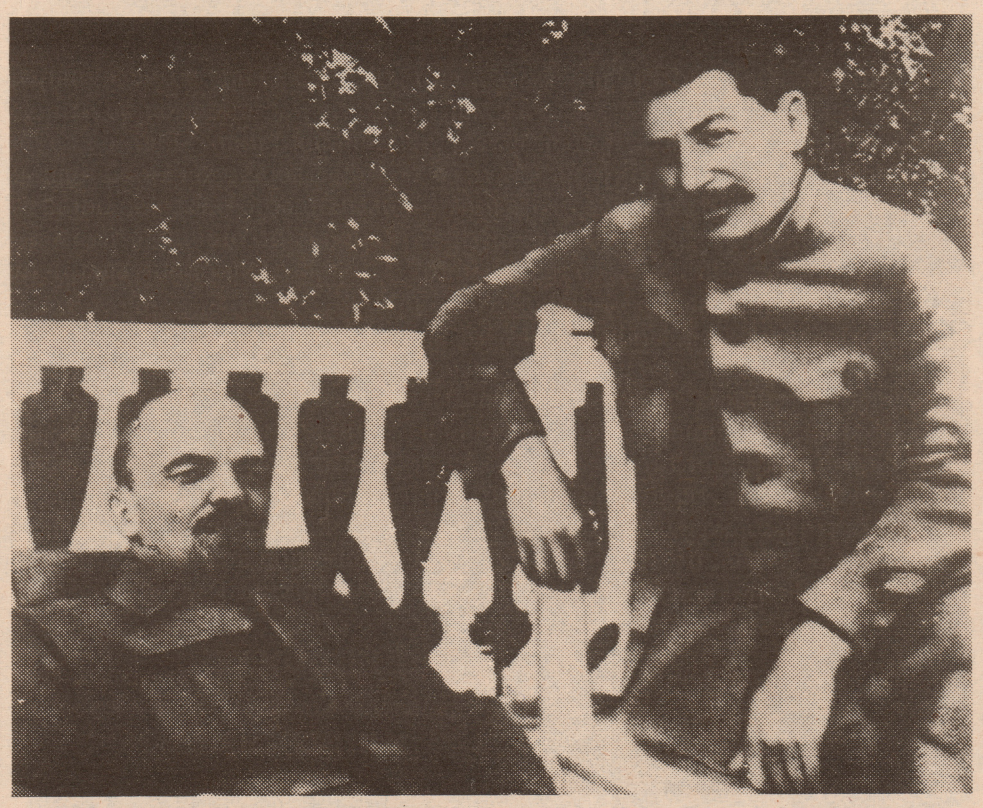
Pero en cierto nivel, no importa cuál de las dos explicaciones es la más plausible porque ambas implican el punto hecho antes — en la concepción de Lenin, la masa de los obreros no hacen las decisiones políticas, ya sea porque ellas son reservadas para el partido (los delegados de los obreros pueden "discutir" y al probar las decisiones del partido en los soviéts), o porque ellas ya no existen.

Da la tentación de elaborar sobre este punto, para tratar de probarlo en vez de simplemente sugerirlo. Pero creo que no es posible el probarlo de una forma directa. Aquellos que creen que Lenin creía en democracia verdadera de los obreros, donde los obreros discuten y llevan a cabo las decisiones políticas y económicas de la sociedad, leerán *El Estado y La Revolución* en esa forma. Después de haber leído el libro muchas veces, y después de much reflección, yo no creo que Lenin creía en lo que nosotros le llamaríamos democracia obrera. El control directo de los obreros sobre las fábricas y democracia de los obreros son, para Lenin, pasos, parte de la fase de transición, hacia una "democracia elevada" muy abstracta, lo que es en realidad una "dictadura del proletariado" muy centralizada, jerárquica, burocrática, regimentada.

Falta de dimensión humana

Quizás, este punto puede ser ilustrado mejor de una manera diferente. Lenin no parece reconocer que la revolución socialista debe incluir, en el fondo, un cambio en las relaciones sociales, un cambio en la forma en cual la gente se relaciona los unos a los otros. Este cambio tienen que comenzar desde el principio; no se puede hacer esperar hasta cierto punto indefinido en el futuro, digamos, la fase más alta del comunismo.

Bajo el capitalismo, en gran parte la gente se relacionan en una forma alienada y competitiva. Cooperación existe, por supuesto, pero tiende a subordinarse a la estructura y a la idiosincracia competitiva y jerárquica del capitalismo. El socialismo es una sociedad en la cual la cooperación—la gente cooperando los unos con los otros tratando de trabajar juntos, tratando de vivir juntos—se hace predominante. La gente todavía



Lenin y Stalin.

compite, pero esta competición es primariamente constructiva, permanece en el marco de la gente tratando de cooperar el uno con el otro.

Durante la revolución, las relaciones cooperativas nuevas tienen que comenzar apareciendo entre los obreros y las clases oprimidas inmediatamente. Los obreros tienen que aprender a relacionarse de esta nueva forma inmediatamente. Ellos aprenden esto por medio de la reorganización de las situaciones de trabajo, y por medio del gobierno directo de la sociedad en todos los niveles. Ellos tienen que aprender como conducir todos sus asuntos por medio de cooperación. Y ellos (nosotros) podemos aprender esto haciéndolo directamente.

Esta dimensión entera de la revolución socialista parece haberse perdido por completo en Lenin. La revolución socialista, en su concepción, es un su mayoría un cambio de estructura, un cambio en forma. Pero mucho del contenido de la sociedad anterior—la tecnología burgués, las técnicas de gerencia burgués, las estructuras jeráquicas, la disciplina en la fábrica, y, yo sugeriría, las relaciones sociales burgueses—todavía permanecen.

En realidad, la dimensión humana en total no existe en *El Estado y La Revolución*. Es cierto que Lenin está escribiendo teoría y la teoría es abstracta. Pero en cierto modo su teoría acerca de lo que debería ser una de las transformaciones más profundas de la sociedad humana, de las relaciones sociales humanas, de la personalidad humana, es realmente insípida, inhumana. En ciertas ocasiones, Lenin parece emocionarse, pero su visión es tán abstracta que me parece muy hueca, al menos ahora.

Yo sospecha que esta insipidez refleja un problema más profundo en su pensamiento y mucho de lo que es la teoría marxista en general. En cierta manera, la gente, seres humanos concretos, no son completamente reales. La realidad real es las categorías sociales y históricas, las clases sociales, los estados, las fuerzas y las relaciones de producción, las formas de producción.

Estas categorías puedan o no puedan ser útiles para analizar la historia y la sociedad humana. Pero no son ellas mismas, esa historia, esa sociedad, esa realidad humana. Los seres humanos (y la historia humana), no pueden ser reducidos a puramente categorías lógicas. Ellas son más complicadas. Esto es lo que hace interesante, único, amable y odiable, etc. Y esto es lo que hace a los seres humanos y las sociedades humanas últimadamente impredicibles. Sin esta impredicibilidad, sin esta dimensión especial de gente que no puede ser reducida a categorías, a abstracciones, no hay vida.

La falacia fundamental de *El Estado y La Revolución*, gran parte del marxismo y gran parte de lo que pasa por sociología y teoría social, entonces, es que se toma a sí mismo demasiado serio. Cree que las abstracciones, las categorías, las teorías son la realidad real, y lo concreto, lo que no puede ser reducido, es cierta forma de epifenómeno, algo derivativo y no completamente real. Estas teorías puedan o no puedan ser verdaderos (queriendo decir, aproximadamente cierto), pero ellas no son la realidad. La gente concreta, la historia concreta—vida—es la realidad.

Viendo la teoría marxista como la realidad base, Lenin en *El Estado y La Revolución* y en en otras partes concibió una sociedad revolucionaria que restringe a los seres humanos y a la vida humana dentro de los que son últimadamente abstracciones muertas. Con un método fundamental, una mentalidad, como esta, ¿hay alguna duda de que el movimiento que Lenin construyó y dirigió creó una sociedad que limita nuestra vida en el interés de estructuras muertas, categorías e ideologia?

En conclusión, me gustaría repetir un punto que he hecho periódicamente. Yo no estoy tratando de probar que todo lo que Lenin hizo o escribió era no democrático, estadocapitalista o totalitario. Tampoco estoy tratando de sugerir que Lenin de su propia voluntad y sabiéndolo, era una persona antidemocrática (como decir Hitler, quien sabía exactamente lo que estaba haciendo). Yo creo que Lenin se miraba a sí mismo como alguien que era democrático, dedicado al gobierno de los obreros, etc. Sin embargo, su concepción subjacente y su visión de la dictadura del proletariado, o una sociedad dirigida por los obreros, no eran democráticas.

Gran parte de esto tuvo que ver con el hecho de que él era producto de su tiempo y lugar; la Rusia retrógrada y antidemocrática de finales del siglo 19 y principios del siglo 20, con una clase obrera muy pequeña y muy joven rodeada por millones de campesinos analfabetos, etc. Parte de la razón tuvo que ver con el crecimiento y la personalidad propia de Lenin.

Pero yo creo que la mayor parte de la razón por la visión últimadamente antidemocrática de Lenin era su creencia de que marxismo es una ciencia, lo cual para él quería decir que una verdad absoluta. Si la teoría es *Verdadera*, y dice que la revolución de los obreros y una sociedad de los obreros tomarán tal forma y que harán tal cosa, entonces no hay lugar para una democracia real. Ya que es totalmente inevitable, no hay lugar para alternativas, y si hay alternativas, ello es la prerogativa de aquellos que entienden la Ciencia, los que tienen acceso a la Verdad, es decir, el partido revolucionario. Este será el tema de la siguiente parte.

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Gdansk...

(Continued from page 9)

the tanks would explode the canisters.) We were brought to the central headquarters of the strike, shown their printshop—and also got a full tour of Wojciech's graffiti! At that time the strike atmosphere was pretty comic and festive. Solidarność had its own "tanks"—satirical vehicles made of styrofoam, camouflage-painted, and in the shape of a tank. There was a very funny motorcade of these and other vehicles, with some workers dressed in helmets like troops. At one prominent gate workers were gathered on a roof (where we joined them). It was very close to the street and trams, so when a tram would go by the workers would sing, chant and wave flags. And so the tramdrivers would toot their horns, and passengers flashed the "V" sign. The very dour ZOMOs were not amused! This roof had Solidarność "artillery"—a camouflage-painted styrofoam replica of an artillery piece!

A most memorable and historic moment was a special meeting WiP and RSA called for us one afternoon on the grass. There they wrote statements in support of the planned blockade of the Pentagon on October 17, and the Tompkins/Washington Square Park struggles in New York City. (See page 3.) This underscored the high moral character of WiP and RSA—people who are so oppressed, but who take time to also support struggles in the West and the Third World.

Other notes: RSA is primarily Gdańsk-based while Gdańsk WiP is interconnected to WiP throughout Poland. Many in RSA joined WiP, but they

Wojciech Jankowski

work together. Anarchists all over Poland are planning a network—with its own zine—called "Anarchist Intercity." Both of us [C.H. and author] were asked to write critiques of the Kraków Conference which *@ Cappella* will print. Chris also wrote a brief history of gay liberation in the U.S. for *@ Cappella*. We were able to make a sizable money contribution to *@ Cappella* from Neither East Nor West.

And so sadly we had to leave, and will miss greatly all who we had met and who were so hospitable.

Westerners! Get in on a good thing! Gdańsk WiP wants contacts, periodicals, money, and equipment. They are networked with others throughout Poland. Check them out on our contact list (published in *On Gogol Boulevard*).

PS: WiP gave us a stack of (short version) English language *@ Cappella*s. Send us a self-addressed stamped envelope for one. If you want to make a donation (tax-deductible to Aspect Foundation and marked "*@ Cappella*") we'll get it to them.

Love to WiP, RSA and Poosha (Gosia's cat). **—Bob McGlynn**

Kraków: We stayed in a housing block like this one in Nowa Huta—Stalinist industrial paradise of the '50s. Below, WiP caucus during conference (see Chris's article at right).

Gdańsk: WiP members and others doing strike support work in St. Brygida's (top). Below, the meeting on the grass (see Bob's article at left).

Stream of Consciousness

IMPRESSIONS, QUICK snapshots really, mostly of faces. In Kraków, Marek and Andrzej, from WiP in Wroclaw. Marek I met last year...quirky, humorous face, long hair then, short now. Main interests: ecology and street theatre. This time he showed up with a gay rights button—he's not gay, does it "as a provocation." Andrzej, his friend, semi-punk haircut, wanted info on gay rights (he's not gay either—too bad). A rarity in Poland: he has politics like mine on Nicaragua—defend Nicaragua, send aid to the people, not the government or the contras. (When we told this to Joanne Landy, she asked Bob, "Where do you find them?" He said, "Just look for the punks.") Asked by Bob to pose for a picture, Marek and Andrzej clown, wagging their heads. Later: a quick caucus of WiP, writing a motion. Twenty cigarettes light up at once, Andrzej in the middle, serious as hell, formulating the motion and writing it down....

Nothing is so precious as the early phases of a movement, when people are intense, devoted, and participating all together, as in that caucus. The bureaucratic shenanigans from the podium threaten to blunt this, but they don't, I think....

At St. Brygida's in Gdańsk: they won't let us in, because WiP "disrupted the Krákow conference." Poker-faced young man at the gate. A kid, blond, younger—17?—says, "Don't be stupid," and opens the gate himself....

Entering the shipyard...we expected to go over some wall, instead we go through a gate where, first, our OK from St. Brygida's is checked, then we pass through a little maze of waist-high railings with men on either side, enough to choke off entry, not a wall of bricks, but of workers....

Inside...people sprawled face down on styrofoam matting, dead to the world...the management cafeteria, now strike HQ and workers' cafeteria—strikers lined up for plates of potatoes and ground meat (everywhere in Poland meat, meat, meat)...outside, fooling around, the 12-year-olds who (along with old men and women) carry food and supplies inside—"strike boys," our guide calls them as we pass on the "taxi"...at the gate with the gas canisters, six to eight workers on duty, lounging behind a sort of canvas guardbooth with the painted sign "HOTEL VICTORIA, GDANSK".... The silence: any solid strike is quiet, the place is locked up tight by the workers; here, enormous construction cranes and enormous ships (including one Russian destroyer), all still, except for two Finnish freighters on which drydock work has been allowed because they brought supplies to Solidarność.... The regime, too, is silent, tomorrow it will make a tactical retreat (agreeing to negotiate with Walesa).... The workers are making the decisions. The regime can't do without production, it can't do without workers, there is a permanent bomb under its feet. You can't say they'll win (that's a question of consciousness and organization) but this, I think, is the power they can beat back but can never finally defeat. Never. **—Chris**

Krakow Conference Cont'd.

Bob...

(Continued from page 8)

U.S. The invitation promised all such papers would be translated and copies made available at the conference. Well, it never happened. We thought that might happen so we brought a copy of our statement with us. We asked that copies please be made. They weren't. Chris was unable to give a talk critical of U.S. policies, although he asked several times. An activist from Holland asked to show peace films. He wasn't allowed. Gdańsk WiP asked if they could collect money for the Gdańsk strike. They weren't allowed. For us this is no way to promote cooperation—it is simply totalitarianism all over again.

For us it was particularly insulting to have U.S. politicians speak. We thought this was supposed to be an independent conference. We have always protested when Soviet officials address Western peace conferences. Politicians are liars and hypocrites, and have *no* place in citizens' events.

A most disgusting part was when Jan Rokita (a nominal member of Kraków WiP) defended the U.S. invasion of Grenada—and got applause! The invasion was not because of human rights abuses in Grenada—what about Paraguay or Chile? The invasion was part of a U.S. policy that justifies overthrowing any government of which the U.S. disapproves. This policy goes back to the 19th century—it didn't start in 1959 when Castro came to power. Grenada is now a U.S. neo-colonial *paradise*—mass unemployment, hunger, social services reduced, addiction. Nice, huh? Why even mention when during the invasion the U.S. bombed a mental hospital and killed the patients. We don't think human rights and invasions have much in common.

Many brave and good people worked long and hard—under difficult Polish conditions—to make the conference a success—and we respect them. At the same time future gatherings must be conducted in an alternative and truly democratic and activist manner—otherwise there's no point.

PS: Human rights should be for the *whole* human race—not just for men. The meeting was dominated by male planners. We saw no men attending the bathrooms, checking bags, or serving food. The men had "important" jobs—the women the shitwork. Of course the work the women did was important too and well done. But human rights includes equality—tasks should be shared equally. Or maybe men are too stupid to cook? Women aren't idiots or workhorses—they can be involved in politics too. Ann Marie Hendrickson from Neither East Nor West gave me a button (that had a combined anarchist and feminist symbol) to give as a present to WiP member Gosia. Gosia wore it at the meeting and said she got some abuse. But hell, it's a start—and I can tell you Gosia is a good person to start it! We understand about Polish culture not accepting feminism, and it's not our place to tell Poles what to do. But we wish all the best to Polish feminists, and will give them all the help they need!

With all my love to WiP!□

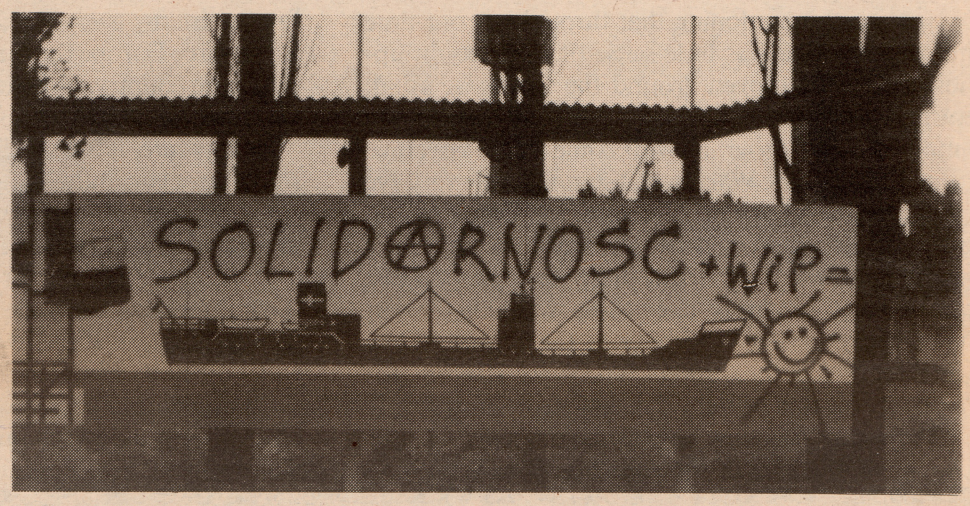
Chris...

(Continued from page 8)

know personally, but Freedom House is known in the U.S. as a very conservative outfit—it follows U.S. government policy, and calls for human rights *only* in countries where the U.S. government also does this. For example, it has *not* protested continued (and increasing) murders of human rights activists by death squads connected to the government of the Philippines, a government the U.S. supports.

I'd also like to comment about the AFL-CIO trade union organization, which made an appearance at the conference when one of its leaders, Mr. Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers, promised support for Solidarność. People in Poland should realize that the AFL-CIO leaders are like leaders of the official trade unions in Poland. They have high salaries (over $100,000 per year) and have nothing to do with the life of the workers. They make militant speeches in Kraków, but they never take militant *actions* in the U.S. They did nothing when President Reagan destroyed a militant union, PATCO (the air traffic controllers' union) in 1981. They *oppose* militant strikes. The AFL-CIO leaders are *hated* by militant workers in the U.S., or they are seen as completely irrelevant.

I think it's impossible to build a fighting, militant human rights movement when you are allied politically with either the USSR, or the U.S. government, which suppresses human rights in "its" empire and within the U.S. So I think the cooperation of representatives of Freedom House, the U.S. labor "Establishment," and also the U.S. government (Mr. Michael Hammond, a staff member of the Senate) at the Kraków conference and in the proposed Secretariat is not a step forward. I hope it's not too late to reconsider some of the decisions made at the conference.□



How Police Smashed Miners' Strikes

The following statement was distributed at the Kraków conference. For reasons of space, it has been slightly abridged and accounts of events at the Borynia, Moszczenica, and "First of May" mines have been omitted.

Jastrzębie Zdrój, August 26, 1988

To the Participants in the International Human Rights Conference in Cracow

The Inter-Factory Strike Committee with its seat in the "Manifest lipcowy" coal mine strongly appeals to and requests the participants of the Conference to inform public opinion all over the world about the drastic violations of human rights.

As you know, on the 15th of August the strikes in the Silesian coal mines began. We first of all demand the right for the NSZZ "Solidarność" to act legally. We also propound economic demands. The authorities have ignored our protest claiming that the strikes are illegal. Negotiations were undertaken. Instead, till today (August 26) nineteen coal mines have been brutally and ruthlessly crushed.

Below we present a description of the events in the coal mines which ceased to strike:

On the whole, the tactics of the police force was similar everywhere. The efforts were made to disarm psychologically the striking workers by means of demonstration of power outside of the coal mine, cruising convoys of police cars, police horns, helicopters, great number of militarymen in uniforms, aggressive and vulgar behavior of riot police, auxiliary units of militia and militia themselves. Groups of blacklegs and militiamen disguised as workers called for allowing them into the premises of the striking coal mines. Public address loudspeakers insisted on ceasing the strike, security of the striking workers was guaranteed, information about the coal mines which ceased to strike earlier was announced. Constant threats or encouragements to leave the coal mine were imparted on the phone. Until the 25th of August they were not successful, then it was decided that the police forces would attack directly. In such cases the Polish riot police conquered the main gate, blacklegs came in through side entrances, secret police jumped over the fences and the industrial guard units attacked striking workers within the inner area of a given coal mine. Chosen people were singled out of the crowd and detained, the rest of the striking workers were removed from the area of a coal mine.

The "Andaluzja" coal mine, August 23rd: since the morning disguised militiamen demand to be let into the coal mine to resume work. The Strike Committee let out people willing to go. After the speech of Kazimierz Switon the striking workers gather together, their families have been let in. In result, the rest of the striking workers end the strike.

The "Lenin" coal mine, August 23rd: demonstrations of power outside the coal mine. About 1 a.m. the security police manage to open the gate at the time when nobody guards it. The ZOMO forces surround the gathering of miners. Gabriel Jawers lets out those who wish to leave; afterwards ZOMOs attack the rest. Around 2 a.m. the last miners leave the mine.

The "Marcel" coal mine, August 24: a heated propaganda action against the miners, around 2 p.m. The crowd, including many drunk persons attacks the gate and breaks it. A brawl arises, the supervisors attacking from behind. The rest, which gathered by St. Barbara's statue are collected by the police cars.

The Krupiński coal mine, August 25th: that morning, the miners gather for the planned talks with the management but they are surrounded by ZOMOs and the supervisors. Contradictory demands are voiced, some miners leave because of the confusion; the managers insist on the workers leaving the mine. In the afternoon in the confusion, the miners do leave.

The ZM coal mine, August 25: 10 a.m., a gathering of miners decides to continue their protest. At 3 p.m. the manager, the public prosecutor and the security service (SB) call for leaving. In the evening ZOMO cuts the gate with a blowtorch, an attack enters, the miners make a square, then are surrounded and beaten by ZOMOs. Facing beating, kicking and extreme brutality, the miners force their way to the nearby church, still chased and beaten by ZOMOs. Then they manage to leave the church individually.

The Marcinek coal mine, August 25: 10 p.m., ZOMO attack preceded by the manager's demand of dissolving the gathering. Beating the gathered miners, who are praying and singing. They run away, often through the truncheons. Before midnight all the miners are out.

ISH STRIKE VE — THAND REPORTS

trict came to nothing. The police, asked by conference organizers to authorize such a trip, refused, and warned that some visitors might "fall into holes" if it were attempted. My impression, though, is that if WiP had been acting on its own, the trip would have happened—WiP members and Westerners who were willing to risk unpleasantness with the police would simply have gone, and if the cops stopped us, too bad.

(It's worth mentioning that throughout our time in Poland, there was little sense of a society in upheaval. People moved around the streets as usual, shopped as usual. You saw the interest when, for example, a news program with some strike coverage came on TV in the Warsaw rail station, and every eye turned that way; or when the trams in Gdańsk passed the shipyard gates, and people waved or held their hands up in the V-sign. But there was a certain distance to all this, almost like people watching the war news and cheering "the boys at the Front." They were following the strikers who were striking *for them*. It was one of the weaknesses of the strikes.)

The accompanying articles make clear the pro-U.S. tone of many of the speeches. This is nothing unusual in Poland; the consensus is pro-Reagan, pro-U.S. pressure on Russia and on Jaruzelski, and simply pro-U.S. in general. An example of this is the family Bob and I stayed with. The father is a Solidarność activist in his local union. (He told us the workplace has about 3,000 people; at the height of Solidarność in 1981, perhaps 10 percent were active in the union — now, about one tenth that number.) In the complete absence of accurate news in Poland, the family listens, every day, to Voice of America and Radio Free Europe for their only reliable news about their own country. No one can have a bad opinion of the people who are their source of information.

At any rate, it was a relief to meet the WiP people from Wroclaw and Gdańsk, some of whom I knew from the year before — people who have no more love for the U.S. system than for their own.

It's not worth going through a detailed account of the conference — the interest lies elsewhere. But I should mention the trip to Auschwitz (Oswiecim) with which the conference concluded. Auschwitz includes detention cells, execution cells, various cellblocks, and a Jewish museum that tells its story mainly through photographs. The most moving part of this, for me, came at the end: a hole in the floor in the size and shape of a grave, with stones from the old Jewish cemetery in Oswiecim, destroyed by the Germans. (Not content with killing living Jews....) This is ringed with candles, and on the wall, in Polish and Hebrew, from Genesis: "And God said to Cain, 'The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the earth.'"

A truly harrowing experience, but with its attendant ironies. One was our tour guide, who barked out everything in a clipped, military voice. ("Just here — you see very interesting pictures of Warsaw ghetto.") Industrialized humanitarianism, I told myself smugly. When I asked him later if he did the tour every day, he sighed. "Yes; I am retired, and my income is not high. With inflation so bad, I must do something." Another irony: the wreath-laying at the Birkenau monument that closed our visit. Albert Shanker, of the American Federation of Teachers and the AFL–CIO Board, made a speech that began with a personal statement about his relatives who died here; then, when he had us softened up, came the stinger: the lesson was that Auschwitz-Birkenau was "the product of a misguided peace movement in the '20s and '30s." Politics never ceases, not for a single moment. Jacek Czaputowicz, of WiP, made the only decent speech: our international movement, though still small, was the best guarantee against a repetition of these events.

Below, we are presenting a number of articles and documents. The first two are Bob's report on the Kraków conference, with additional comments by me. These were written at the request of our friends in Gdańsk WiP, for their journal *@ Cappella*. Our impressions of Gdańsk, WiP, and the shipyards were written after our return for the East/West magazine *On Gogol Boulevard*. These give enough detail on this part of the visit so that there's no point in writing about it here. Finally, the above-mentioned appeal by the Jastrzebie miners to the Kraków conference gives a graphic view of the police attacks on the strikers. □

Gdansk...

GDANSK—What can we say? It was a pleasure and a half to finally meet the anarchist-influenced Gdańsk WiP (G-WiP), the anarchist Movement for Alternative Society (RSA), and visit the Gdańsk shipyard strike.

We had met Gosia, Adam and Anna from G-WiP at the Kraków Conference and from there travelled to Gdańsk. Through the mails and some phone calls we had grown to know each other and become very close. They filled us in on some details about themselves: they have 15–18 members with close working contacts with a number of activists from other cities. Their zine, *@ Cappella*, is distributed throughout Poland. Its pages are open to other contributors. Their interests are exactly like that of anarchist sorts in the West: peace, freedom, ecology, feminism, gay rights, workers' self-management, alternative culture, graffiti, animal rights, vegetarianism, and so on. It was made clear though, that like any group, there are some differences of opinion. So a few may not take feminism seriously and some are interested in anarcho-syndicalism while others don't consider economic issues. Three members are religiously inclined, while the rest aren't. They believe in non-violence as a tactic, but support people fighting in self-defense.

So we spent a few days hanging out, talking about future cooperation, partying (we went to a "secret" gay bar!) and doing the "revolutionary tour," i.e.: we visited St. Brygida's Church where the parish house is used as a base of operations/communications center for the shipyard strike outside of the shipyard, and we also got into the striking shipyard itself. Like during last spring's Gdańsk strike, WiP is very involved. In St. Brygida's you can see them at work making banners and distributing leaflets and such. They also have people in the shipyard organizing—particularly Wojciech Jankowski running around spray-painting comic graffiti all over the place! We wrote a statement supporting the strike in the name of Neither East Nor West and also one in the name of the Independent Courier Association (a bike messenger workers' group I'm a member of). These statements were distributed by the strikers in the shipyard and mentioned in strike bulletins.

WiP members led us into the shipyard through a free gate not guarded by the hated ZOMO (special police). We were given a tour around on small flatbed motorized carts ("taxis"), met Solidarność leaders and were brought to various gates where workers had gathered with Solidarność flags and such decorating the yard fencing. One gate had gas canisters laid on the street behind it to ward off a tank attack. (The weight of

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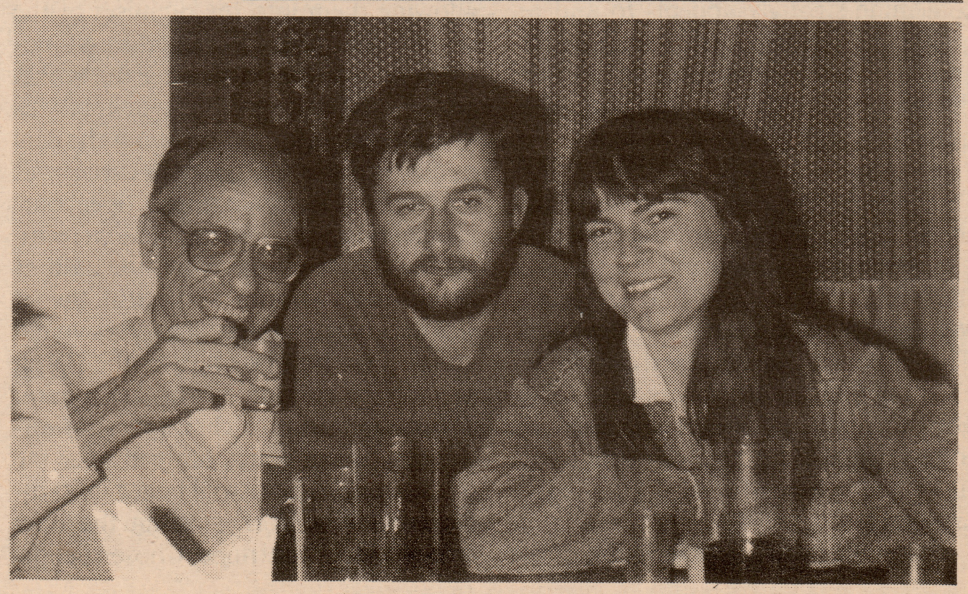
Strikers on roof at Lenin Shipyard wave and chant at passing tram (not seen). Below: Chris, Adam and Gosia in gay bar, Gdańsk.



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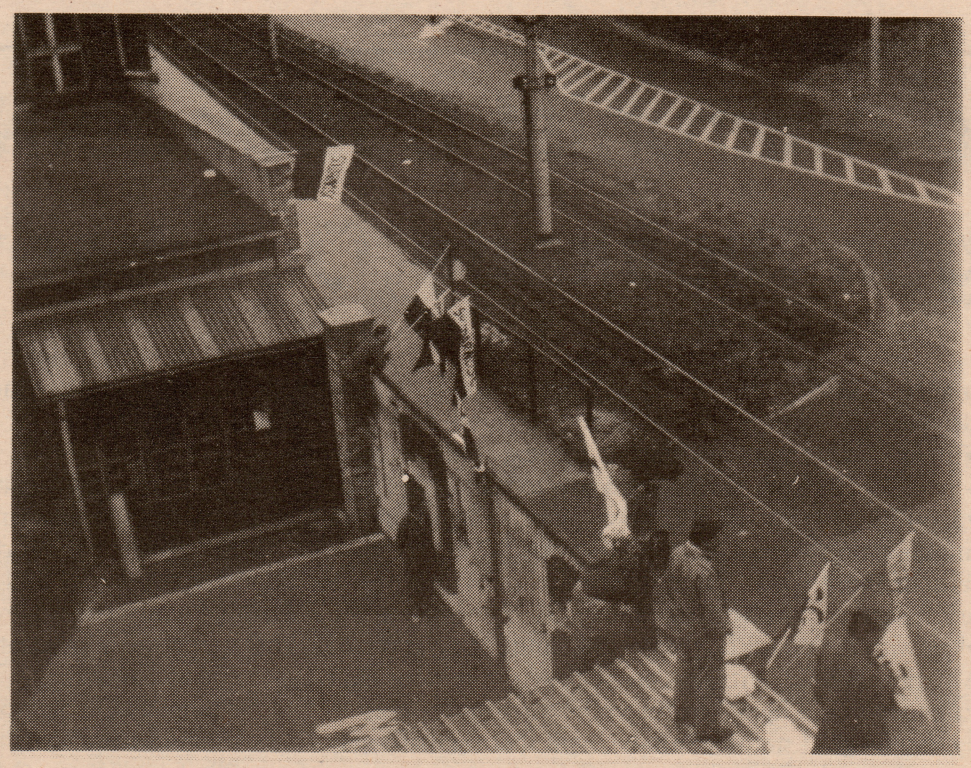


By CHRIS HOBSON

IN mid-August, for second time in four months, Polish workers organized a massive wave of strikes. At its high point, workers shut down 11 coal mines in the country's southern coal belt, port and transit facilities in Szczecin in the northwest, and shipyard and port facilities in Gdańsk. In the middle of the upheaval, Bob McGlynn and I travelled to Poland and got a firsthand glimpse of this major struggle.

The strikes had both an economic and a political side. Economically, the main demand was for wages to offset runaway inflation. By official figures, prices in Poland are rising 60% a year; the real figures would probably be much higher. But the economic demands were quickly joined by the demand for the relegalization of Solidarność.

In the second week of the strikes, the government sent militia troops against the miners. They recaptured most of the mines, but some miners barricaded themselves in the shafts and a standoff began. The government also sent militiamen against the Szczecin port and transport workers, but the strike continued. With most of the coal strikes crushed, the center of gravity shifted to the north and the demand for relegalization of Solidarność. The Solidarność leaders around Lech Walesa began arguing that relegalization—even talks with the government about a future relegalization—was the one step necessary to end the crisis.

On August 26 Poland's minister of the interior, Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, appeared on TV to offer "round table talks" with the opposition. Five days later, Walesa won from Kiszczak a promise that the government would discuss some form of relegalization in the future. Armed only with this promise, Walesa called for the strikes to end.

They did, but it took Walesa eight hours of speechmaking and argument in the Gdańsk shipyards to gain his point. At the all-night meeting (August 31–September 1), workers hooted and whistled at Walesa, complaining that they were being asked to leave the shipyard and give up their strike weapon, with nothing concrete gained on relegalization and nothing at all on wages and other economic demands. But though Walesa won his point, the workers left with their heads high and their organization intact.

In Jastrzebie, the workers refused to come up from the pits until Walesa travelled from Warsaw to explain the deal personally. It took 15 hours to convince the miners to call off their strike. Again Walesa was booed and jeered, and again the strikers marched out in good order.

Since the government had succeeded in crushing most of the strikes, some sort of compromise may have been unavoidable. But not this one. Our friends in Gdańsk told us later that most shipyard workers were "furious" and felt "betrayed" by the settlement.

Shipyard graffiti, Gdańsk

The original reason Bob and I went to Poland was to attend an International Human Rights Conference held in the southern city of Kraków, near the coalfields, from August 25 to 28. It was organized jointly by Solidarność figures and people from Wolność i Pokój (WiP—Freedom and Peace), the peace/ecology movement that had held a similar conference in Warsaw in 1987, which I also attended. (See *Torch/La Antorcha*, May 15, 1987.) Of the two organizing groups, Solidarność has much more political weight in Poland, and it more or less called the shots at the conference. As many as 1,500 people were registered, with perhaps 500 in the hall at any one time.

The conference, of course, had been planned months in advance, so it was only a coincidence that it fell in the middle of a major working class struggle. Much of the time, in fact, you would not have known that the struggle was taking place. In a fairly bureaucratically-run affair, the preplanned presentations went on mostly as preplanned. There was a good side to this, and a bad side. The good side was that we got to hear a very large number of activists from most Eastern European countries informing us of conditions and struggles in their countries. The bad side was that the conference did very little to aid the struggle simultaneously happening in the ports and coalfields. A representative of the miners' Interfactory Strike Committee did speak, and an informational appeal (reprinted here) was distributed, but several attempts to organize a solidarity trip to the mine dis-

Krakow Conference...

By BOB McGLYNN

HMM? WHEN I was asked what I thought about the Kraków Human Rights Conference by some of my friends from Gdańsk Freedom and Peace (WiP) my immediate reaction was, "Bullshit!" (They agreed.)

But okay, I'll be nice for a moment. Myself and Chris Hobson who represented Neither East Nor West (I also represented the Independent Courier Association bike messenger group) from New York City were under no illusion that this would be a conference of peace/alternative/ecology/anarchist/"new left" type movements. We understood it would be a mixed bag of political ideologies, with a strong cold-war, right-wing current. But we thought it would be important to attend to support human rights in Poland—including the strikes — and also meet WiP members, especially the Gdańsk crew who we've developed excellent relations with. We also wanted to be there as a counterweight to U.S. establishment types attending who are so supposedly in love with freedom in Poland but forget about it when it comes to Yugoslavia, Romania, Zaire, El Salvador, Indonesia, China, etc., etc., etc. They also turn a blind eye to continuous abuses in the U.S., whose "democracy" is defined by the fact that we never vote for those who really pull the strings of society, e.g., big business, banks, real estate interests, the military and others.

Anyway, the good points: Both our guide when we arrived, Jerzy, and Alexander and Bola whose home we stayed in, were some of the finest people we've met. Hospitality and friendliness are memorable points of visiting Poland. At the Conference itself, positive points were meeting WiP, the Polish Socialist Party, and others from East and West Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Guyana, Holland and other countries. This is where concrete contacts and planning for activity were made. For us, human rights is not something so much to *believe in*—it's something *one does. Also the fact that the meeting happened in a dictatorial society is a great precedent.*

Bad points: The conference reminded us of bullshit peace movement or mainstream "leftist" meetings in the U.S. It was very controlled and bureaucratically organized. It was all talk and speeches with little or no real concrete planning for activities to fight for freedom or peace. Our group had sent in (as the conference invitation asked) a statement months ago. The statement concentrated on human rights abuses in the

(Continued on page 10)

By CHRIS HOBSON

TO add briefly to what Bob said: My impression of the conference is that it was a good deal more moderate and friendly to the West than a conference that WiP organized by itself would have been.

One example of this is the composition of the "Secretariat" announced on the last day of the conference. The members are: Mr. James Morehouse (Britain — a member of the European Parliament), Jeri Laber (Helsinki Watch—U.S.), Istvan Baba (Hungary), Zbigniew Romaszewski and Jan Rokita (Poland), and Mr. James Finn (Freedom House—U.S.). Laber is a respected human rights activist. So, I believe, is Baba. Mr. Rokita is better known to readers of *@ Cappella* than to me, but I had the same reaction to his statement about Grenada as Bob did—at the very least, the statement ignored a long history of U.S. intervention in our hemisphere. Mr. Romaszewski is also well known to Polish readers—my own impression of him comes from the WiP seminar in Warsaw in May 1987, when he argued with me that American military power is a "lesser evil" compared to Russian military power. (My own position, briefly: in Central and South America, Africa, and parts of Asia, U.S. control, exerted through violent, socially conservative local governments, is the *main* enemy of people working for a more just society; in Eastern Europe and other parts of

Jacek Czaputowicz of WiP speaks at Birkenau monument.

Asia, Russian power is the *main* enemy; politically, we must oppose all domination by "Great Powers" and cannot support either the U.S. or the USSR as a "lesser evil.") Morehouse is a conservative politician, a representative of the British ruling class. Mr. Finn I don't

(Continued on page 10)

Join the Anarchist Contingent at Pentagon Blockade, October 17

(Continued from page 1)
and Polish workers fighting against Soviet rule *and* Lower East Side youth battling the NYC Police Department.

We are going to the Pentagon Blockade to participate in communal action against militarism. Like many of those organizing the blockade, we refuse to be complacent about or complicit with the U.S. war against Central America. But we're not going to Washington to march in line, sit when marshals say sit, and get arrested when and where the police and the marshals agree.

As anarchists, we think resistance needs to be diverse, creative and militant. We need no leaders or hierarchy to tell us when and how to protest; we need to test our new found strength and to learn to work together. We are trying to build a new kind of movement—a movement that fights U.S. imperialism and celebrates the cultural diversity of Central America. A movement that fights to protect the earth and celebrates nature. A movement that fights for gay liberation and celebrates our sexuality. A movement that fights against racial oppression and celebrates Latin and Black pride.

So join us in resisting and celebrating at the anarchist contingent at the Pentagon Blockade. For more information about the contingent and transportation arrangements from New York: leave your name and number at 212-979-8353 or come to a meeting,

Thursday October 6, 7:30 pm
Anarchist Switchboard
324 E. 9th Street, Manhattan

Impressions of El Salvador

(Continued from page 1)
U.S. government and the local ruling class, by military repression and, lately, by nine years of civil war.

Within the left in the U.S., the RSL is distinguished by its distinct political position. On the one hand, the organization supports and desires the victory of the FMLN (the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front), insofar as such a victory would mean a victory against U.S. imperialism. On the other hand, the RSL is critical of the FMLN since, in the event that it does overthrow the current Salvadorean government, it would not establish true socialism, as the RSL understands the term.

Ever since I have known the RSL, I have supported its point of view and analysis with respect to the liberation struggles in Central America. Basing myself on these beliefs, I wanted to ascertain what the likely outcome of the Salvadorean struggle would be.

However, based on my limited personal observations, I consider the political situation in El Salvador to be truly disconcerting and, at times, it seems to totally elude any kind of prediction. As far as the people are concerned, my impression is that the material and human damage has been so tremendous, has caused such impatience, lack of hope, apathy and other kinds of social behavior that these factors will actually have an impact on the outcome of the Salvadorean people's struggle.

The main type of reaction that one gets from someone who has lived in El Salvador during the last ten years is one of weariness and helplessness. It is quite evident that all sectors of the population are sick of the war: the people, the extreme right, the Christian Democracy and, one suspects, the FMLN as well.

The right proposes a solution to the conflict that would mean the complete annihilation of the FMLN, without sparing a massacre of the civilian population that lives in the guerrilla-controlled territory. According to the right, the blame for the stalemate in the war lies with the Christian Democracy and the U.S. Congress. The Christian Democrats propose that the FMLN surrender completely. For its part, the FMLN seeks a solution involving the formation of a coalition government that would include its forces. And the people, who do not necessarily identify with any these forces and who are the ones suffering from the destruction of the country, simply have no way to participate. Their only option is to vote for the extreme right or for the Christian Democrats who, up to now, have only represented the interests of the U.S.

In the elections for representatives to the Legislative Assembly held on March 20, ARENA (the Republican National Alliance) and combined forces of the right won 30 seats out of a total of 60 in the assembly. Given the tight relationship between ARENA and the death squads, it is difficult, and a little frightening, to figure out the reasons for ARENA's support. But in reality, rather than signifying support for any of the contestants, the results of the elections demonstrate the lack of viable alternatives, as well as dissatisfaction with the inability of the Christian Democracy to produce meaningful social and economic reforms. They also reflect the greatest degree of impatience with the war.

For me, one of the most disconcerting aspects of the situation in El Salvador is the degree of political alienation of the majority of people. With the exception of the church, the government and the FMLN, no other sector participates in the political discourse of the country. There are no workers' trade unions or peasant associations whose participation among the contending forces has any significance.

The church, which has maintained contact with the people, has limited itself to playing a purely diplomatic role between the FMLN and the government. And this sector of the church is perhaps the most conservative that has ever existed. The liberal church, which in the past expressed popular sentiment, has been exterminated by the government as well as the church hierarchy itself.

In the schools, from the primary grades to high school, talk of the war is totally out of place. I also get the impression that in the university centers, with the exception of the National University of San Salvador, the state of the country is not discussed. Two high school students in different schools told me that they do not remember one instance where any mention of the political situation in the country was made. This silence is without doubt the result of fear instilled by years of repression. But I also get the impression that it is part of the culture created by years of war.

The shameless attitude of the mass media is worth noting. The two main newspapers (*El Diario de Hoy* and *La Prensa Gráfica*), devote approximately two thirds of each issue to social events: births, communions, weddings, receptions of foreign dignitaries, etc. The daily headlines are about international events. One of the most popular for almost two weeks was about the big drought in the U.S. Midwest. The best entertainment program, aside from the soap operas, was the NBA finals (the Los Angeles Lakers vs. the Detroit Pistons).

To the degree that one travels in the countryside, one is surrounded by the army as well as every form of destruction. In whatever trip you take that is not within the same city or town, you must be prepared to be stopped at least three times, at what are popularly called checkpoints. At each checkpoint, you must present personal identification and, in the majority of cases, be registered.

The amount of destruction of the infrastructure, caused by the sabotage of the FMLN, complicates the lives of poor people even more. I get the impression that a great number of people understand little about the war, and even less about the destruction, above all, of the roads. In such a small country, in which the supply of products of daily consumption, especially food, depends upon the ability of the people themselves to procure them, and not on corporations as in the U.S., the destruction of the infrastructure is something that greatly inconveniences people.

But what I really wanted to know is—what do people really think about the FMLN? The only way to find this out is to live in the country for a good period of time. Otherwise you can believe what you read outside the country.

To the extent that I can confirm it, this is my estimation of what is happening in El Salvador at the moment. As I said at the beginning, trying to arrive at an opinion of what the likely outcome of the war will be, based on some form of popular expression, is almost impossible. The human and material decay is immeasurable and, although we in this country may not be content with anything less than true liberation—and we must not be content with anything less than that—the Salvadorean people appear to be destined to accept anything that approximates tranquility.□

Ecology and Resistance

Below we publish an article on the relation between the ecological crisis and the capitalist system, written by a libertarian prisoner in the provincial prison in Soria, Spain. The article appeared in ¡¡Libertad!!, a publication of the Committee of Aid and Solidarity for Anarchist Prisoners. Copies of ¡¡Libertad!! may be obtained from CASPA, Apdo. de Correos no. 55106, 28080 Madrid, España. The translation to English is our own.

By PABLO SERRANO SERRANO

WITH the arrival of the industrial era and the development of capitalism came the plunder of the earth's resources. Its sources of energy are being used up, its cycles are not respected, desertification, pollution, danger to the biosphere... these are a reality which, if not remedied, will put an end to the planet and, therefore, to Humanity in a short time.

We are being taken toward this situation by the social system in which we live, a system based on exploitation and privilege. In this system, production is not carried out to meet the needs of Humanity, but rather for the acquisition and accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, who will create ever more costly and socially useless goods (all the variety of armaments or those destined for a consumer society). This irrationality in production is responsible for the hunger and misery of the people of the Third World and the growing pockets of poverty that we have in the most advanced capitalist countries. From the myth of an opulent society, from wastefulness, from "salaried work for all," at the expense of the underdeveloped countries, it has come to the point of not being able to meet the minimum subsistence of the people.

Facing this reality, the struggle for the defense of nature and of the people cannot be limited to fighting these effects, or trying to achieve small changes, such as those that require polluting factories to adopt methods to reduce it. The facts require us to question the very production of these products and society itself. This social change is impossible to achieve through the means of participation which the system puts in place, because they are trying to channel, to integrate and demobilize every struggle that questions their production and their social order.

The majority of the ecological movement has fallen for this line of participation, from the little groups which are clearly of cross-class composition and which limit their work to judicial and institutional methods, to others which set out to copy options modeled from other countries (like the Greens), or the personal example of "representative" ecologists who have hitched their wagon to the parties, all the way to local mini-groups whose goal is nothing more than to enter into the electoral game through "leftist" platforms in their areas.

All of this has assumed that the gains won by the ecology movement would be minimal and has reduced the movement to marginal and counter-cultural aspects, making it difficult for ecological sectors which follow an anti-capitalist line of struggle to consolidate themselves.

This experience has to be taken into account so as not to fall into the same errors. We must be clear that the struggle for defense of nature and Humanity has to be linked to the struggle for destruction of the kind of society which generates this situation: capitalism. This goal will not be achieved through legalistic, participatory or parliamentary means, nor through isolated sectoral or specific struggles. Faced with a common enemy, the confrontation must be global, where all the struggles have to find their place in a broad movement of resistance and of class, that attacks the system from different fronts, united and interrelated (workers, day laborers, citizens' movement, ecologists, feminists, students, youth, unemployed, anti-repression collectives, pro-amnesty, cultural, specific groups...). Only with a coordinated struggle and through the use of all kinds of methods and means can we push them back, slow their plans, and win victories—both partial and total.

Examples such as those of Riaño and Aldeadávila de la Ribera (Salamanca) and others show that with the mobilization and resistance of a whole village the aggressions of the State can be temporarily slowed and it can be forced to show its true repressive face. But the clearest case is in Lemóniz. Here we can prove that the use of revolutionary methods of struggle and the united action of the company's workers—based on an assembly, sabotage, and no delegation—together with the mobilization of the people and armed struggle, have made possible its total shutdown. Nevertheless, the most important result of this global struggle against the system will be the growth and consolidation which it will produce in the resistance movement, which in turn will contribute to creating the objective conditions for giving the last "little push" to the system. □

CA Hospital Workers

(Continued from page 1)

file as a whole appeared poised to strike at all seven Affiliated Hospitals.

On August 2, 2,000 members of CNA walked off the job, both to support Local 250 and to advance their own demands for an equitable pay increase and reduced workload. In an emotional reunion, CNA nurses joined Local 250 in the picketline. Members of both groups worked together to coordinate joint strike support. They stuck together on the picketline in clashes with scabs flown in by management and formed blockades to prevent the delivery of supplies. In the process nurses from both unions, technicians, housekeepers, janitors, skilled workers and unskilled workers overcame a lot of the boundaries encouraged by management, divisions which are often reinforced in practice by the strategic outlook of the capitalist trade unions.

Faced with the prospect of a total shutdown, management anxiously sought the intervention of Mayor Art Agnos, a liberal Democrat. Agnos had his own motivation: to keep the strike from spreading to the public hospitals, where his administration was trying to squeeze similar concessions from thousands of SEIU and CNA workers in separate negotiations. First, he pushed through a rotten settlement with the public workers. Then he entered the negotiations with Local 250, where a settlement was quickly reached.

Affiliated had originally demanded that Local 250 members pay $100 a month for health coverage; the strikers won a contract which included no co-payments of any kind. Management's attempt to rescind paid sick-leave was also defeated. In addition to guarding their benefits, some classifications also won modest pay increases. Licensed vocational nurses will get a 3% raise each of the next two years. Technicians will get a 1.65% raise the first year and a 3% raise the following year. Other classifications got a small, one-time bonus. Management had originally called for a total pay freeze for two years.

Local 250 is right to view this settlement as a big win. Throughout the industry, the greedheads are attacking workers' hard-won benefits. SEIU leadership should be criticized for its failure to spread the strike to the public hospitals; joining forces with the public workers would have made everyone stronger.

Local 250 members approved the new contracts overwhelmingly (92%). Victory in hand, they reaffirmed their commitment to their sisters and brothers still on strike by supporting a motion to honor the CNA picketline. Local 250 vowed "not to return to work until 24 hours after striking nurses at the same hospitals ratify a contract. We won and we want the nurses to win." At the meeting's conclusion, many Local 250 members rejoined their fellow workers on the picketline. Some hospital workers remained actively involved in the CNA strike right to the finish.

CNA rank and file showed their determination in voting down a tentative agreement by a two-to-one margin on August 19. The union, whose director just happens to be Art Agnos' sister, had campaigned hard for ratification.

We do not know the exact terms of the August 28 settlement. (CNA declined an interview; Local 250 reps indicated that the nurses had won on important pay issues.) Affiliated was forcing nurses to work a 12-hour day, while offering little increase in pay. The nurses were demanding a 21% pay increase over two years to compensate for lagging 8% behind the national average.

The nurses have also contended that chronic understaffing by management means that patients receive inadequate care. Overwork and speed-up invariably affect the quality of a product; in health care the result is often unnecessary death. Nurses at Affiliated Hospitals are responsible for 10 patients per shift; they have demanded a sharp reduction in workload to insure proper care for each patient.

Here, as elsewhere (Los Angeles, Chicago, Buffalo) nurses are emerging as the moral conscience in an industry which views our health, and even our lives, as exploitable commodities. Ultimately, nothing short of social revolution will fundamentally change the quality and character of health care in the U.S. As against the bureaucratic mismanagement of health industry conglomerates we stand for democratic worker self-management and free health care for all! Solidarity and direct action at the point of production are vital components of the struggle it will take to realize our vision of a society based on cooperation and human need. □

The same basic situation exists in the Soviet Union, which is a form of state capitalism, not socialism or communism. It too is an antagonistic, competitive society, split by class conflict between workers and bosses (the state and its functionaries). The bureaucracy claims to plan the economy, but it cannot, due to its basic antagonisms. As a result, on the one hand, there is a vast amount of market exchanges among state enterprises and individuals. On the other hand, there is a great deal of police repression, to hold society together. None of Gorbachev's reforms has changed any of this.

Anarchism means organization

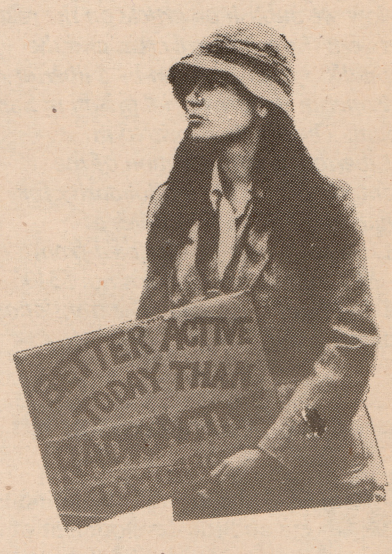
Anarchists propose an alternative to this disorganized society. Contrary to the popular view, anarchists do not propose no organization, but democratic, cooperative organization. Let us look at a description of the free society written by the great Russian anarchist, Peter Kropotkin, in 1910:

> [Under anarchism, harmony is obtained]. . . by free agreements concluded between various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being.
>
> Voluntary associations. . . would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national, and international—temporary or more or less permanent—for all possible purposes: production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, defense of the territory, and so on; and, on the other side, for the satisfaction of an ever-increasing number of scientific, artistic, literary, and sociable needs.
>
> Harmony would. . . result from an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium between the multitude of forces. . . . True progress lies in the direction of decentralization, both territorial and functional, in the development of the spirit of local and personal initiative, and of free federation from the simple to the compound. ("Anarchism," *The Essential Kropotkin*; E. Capouya & K. Tompkins [eds.], NY: Liveright, 1975; pp. 108, 110.)

From this statement we see that Kropotkin believed that a free society should be rich with self-managed organizations. There would be worker-run industries, consumer cooperatives, and communal cities and villages run by direct democracy. We see that he did not expect all organizations to be decentralized. In a sense, some would be even quite centralized, such as industrial organizations.

Kropotkin's vision was pluralistic, assuming a range of different types of organizations for different functions. But he also believed that local groups would tend to unify into an overall federation. There would be as much centralization as needed but free organizations would be *as decentralized as possible*—for as much local initiative and direct democracy as possible.

Kropotkin expected a free society to be extremely flexible. It would be experimental, trying out different methods in different industries, in different localities. I am not even sure that every region would follow Kropotkin's communist program (consumer goods are free for all, and everyone is expected to work as well as they can). Some communities would, but in others, for example, people might chose to pay themselves on the basis of various pay schedules (as Bakunin advocated). Some might be more centralized, others less so. This flexibility is one of the advantages of a decentralized federalism.



As the anarchist Paul Goodman writes in his book on decentralism,

> I am not proposing a system. . . it is improbable that there could be a single appropriate style of organization or economy to fit all the functions of society, any more than there could [be]—or ought to be—a single mode of education, "going to school," that suits almost everybody; or any more than there is a "normal" psychology that is healthy for almost everybody. . . . [We should] decentralize where, how, and as much [as] is expedient. But where, and how and how much. . . require research and experiment. (*People or Personnel*; NY: Random House, 1965; p. 27.)

Finally, Kropotkin assumed the need for organized coercion — for armed force against counter-revolutionary armies and against demoralized individuals. His quotation above lists among the "possible purposes" of voluntary organizations, "mutual protection [and] defense of the territory." Presumably this would not be done by a minority of uniformed police but by the arming of a large proportion of the working population—a popular militia.

Is this Leninism?

Anti-organization anarchists may argue that this is not anarchism, at least not what they mean by anarchism. If organization is good, if a minimal amount of centralism is acceptable, if armed force is necessary — how is this anarchism? In fact, they may ask, doesn't this sound something like Leninism?

I don't think so. For example: in Martin Buber's *Paths in Utopia* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958) — an eccentric, semi-anarchist book—he analyzes Lenin's attitude toward decentralism and centralism during the 1917 Russian Revolution. Buber quotes Lenin as being aware of the upsurge in local organizing: "'All Russia,' he says in April 1917, "is already overspread by a network of local organs of self-administration.'" Lenin's response was to temporarily compromise his fundamental centralism in order to use the decentralized movement. He wrote, "We must be centralists; yet there will be moments when the task will shift to the provinces; we must leave the maximum of initiative to individual localities. . . . [But] only our party can give the watchwords which will really drive the Revolution forwards."

Buber makes the absolutely correct comment: "Instead of the watchword, 'We must be centralists, yet there will be moments. . .,' a genuinely socialist attitude would have put it the other way around: 'We must be decentralists, federalists, autonomists, yet there will be moments when our main task will shift to a central authority because revolutionary action requires it; only we must take care not to let these requirements swamp its objective and temporal frame of reference.'" (Pp. 108–109.) That is, we are decentralists, but the pressure of revolution sometimes requires a degree of centralism—not to mention the need to repress fascist forces. We see this as a necessary compromise, and we must be careful not to let it swamp our intended goal.

Despite superficial similarities, this is not the same as Lenin's approach. It is the opposite.

Implications of pro-organization anarchism

This approach, which I call "pro-organization anarchism," has certain implications. One is that we should argue for this viewpoint. We should not accept our enemy's view of anarchism as anti-organization. We need to let people know what we are really for: not chaos, and not authoritarian organization, but for democratic, cooperative organization.

Another implication is that anarchists should be organizing ourselves right now in order to spread our ideas. A voluntary organization of anarchists and anti-authoritarians is not counterposed to the self-organization of the working people; it will play a role in that self-organization.

Logically pro-organization anarchists should be in favor of steps toward a continental anarchist organization. After all, if we believe that a *whole society* can be organized in a libertarian way, then we should believe that a continental political organization can be built in a libertarian way. While this topic deserves to be discussed another time, this can be said: If *we* cannot build an anti-authoritarian, participatory-democratic organization, then who can? □

Anarchist Organization?

By WAYNE PRICE

AT A MUSIC festival this summer I wore a black T-shirt commemorating the 1987 "Anarchist Gathering" in Minneapolis. Of those who reacted to it, most were favorable or at least interested, but a few made fun. "How could anarchists have a convention?! What do they do: pass resolutions and elect leaders?"

This is the popular view: anarchists do not believe in organization and order; they want chaos ("anarchy"), meaning violence and destruction. To the extent that people know that anarchists are against the state, they imagine anarchists want society as it is, but without the police. They believe this would result in violence and destruction.

To a certain extent, some anarchists agree with this view. That is, they agree that they do not want organization. They may regard themselves as individualists or they may not want any social organization above the level of small groups or little communes. While favoring loose annual gatherings of U.S./Canadian anarchists, they oppose building any permanent international structures. The T-shirt from the 1988 Toronto gathering called it an "anarchist unconvention." They agree with the popular conception that anarchists do not have conventions.

In fact, the key anarchist theoreticians have not been against organization. They were not for *no organization* but for a *different kind of organization* than what the capitalist state provided. They advocated a cooperative, collectivist or communalist, society on a world scale.

> Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and their successors—the collectivist, communist, and syndicalist anarchists — understood that freedom (paradoxical as this may seem) must be organized.... Workers' control [and] community control [of]...self-governing local units and groups can function, survive, and prosper only by coordinating their activities [into] a vast network of free associations, federated at every level.... (Sam Dolgoff, "Introduction," *Bakunin on Anarchism*; Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1980; p. 7.)

Significantly, the early anarchists also called themselves "federalists." Unless we understand this, we won't be able to appreciate that anarchists have had great organizational achievements to their credit. For example, before World War I, anarchists and other anti-authoritarians built major trade union federations in Spain, France, Italy, several Latin American countries, as well as in the U.S. (the IWW—Industrial Workers of the World). These labor organizations encompassed millions of workers and lasted for decades.

Although it may seem surprising to some, another area where anarchists have organized effectively is warfare. During the Russian Revolution, the anarchist Nestor Makhno built a guerrilla army in the Ukraine. The Makhnovist army played a major role in the defeat of the counter-revolutionary (White) forces in alliance with the Red Army. (After the right-wing armies had been defeated, the Makhnovists were betrayed by the Bolsheviks and annihilated.)

Michael Bakunin.

In the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, it was anarchist forces which beat back the orginal fascist military coup. Under the leadership of such militants as Buenaventura Durruti, the anarchist military units were important in holding off the fascists for years.

Even more significant, during the Civil War, anarchist workers and peasants took over factories, industries, cities, and peasant villages, and ran them —collectively, democratically, and productively. This was living proof that an industrial society could be organized on anarchist lines, without losing either productivity or freedom.

Capitalism causes chaos

In actuality, it is capitalism which is chaotic—"anarchic" in the usual sense. Under capitalism, we all compete with each other on the market. Sellers compete with sellers, buyers with buyers, and sellers with buyers. As far as the capitalist system goes, each of us is supposed to be an isolated atom motivated only by greedy self-interest. (In part because this is so inhuman, we tend to cluster into groups, groups which compete with each other: "my" family against all others, "my" religious group against the others, "my" race against other races, "my" country against the rest of humanity, etc.)

A fundamental area of competition is between the buyers and sellers of the commodity labor-power: the capacity of workers to use their muscles and brains in production. For wages, workers sell this capacity (for a limited period of time) to the owners of capital. The interests of the workers and of the capitalists conflict. The workers want higher pay, safer conditions, and do not want to work too hard. The capitalists want as much work for as little pay as they can give. This clash of interests runs through every factory, shop, office, or other place of work, whatever the consciousness of the workers.

We live in the antagonistic world of the marketplace, the world of "each against all." The very process of production is split by conflict. Capitalism is chaos. This society is regulated (to the degree that it is regulated at all), by the market, which is under no one's control. It balances factors and decides among competitors—who wins and who loses. But it does not do this smoothly. It moves by lurches and leaps, such as the boom-and-bust "business cycle." Its winners advance over the broken bodies of the losers. Since very few make it to be rich, most of us are "losers."

The capitalist politicians like to pose the "freedom" of the "free market" as the alternative to the authoritarianism of "Communism." Nothing could be further from the truth. *Capitalism requires authoritarianism* in order to hold together this chaotic, competitive, antagonistic, and vicious society.

In factories and offices, foremen and supervisors struggle to keep the workers at their work. While part of management is devoted to technical coordination (like the conductor in the orchestra), most management activity is directed toward keeping the workers down, like the overseers on the old slave plantations.

Over time, capitalist corporations grow and merge into monopolies. They seek to limit the chaos of the market. Most capitalist centralization is not due to technical efficiency, but to an effort to dominate the market instead of being dominated by it. But the system is too antagonistic for even the biggest capitalists to free themselves from the market's chaos.

So they need something bigger and stronger than any group of capitalists. They need the state, with its bureaucracy, social regulations, and—its essential last resort—its police and military. *The state is needed because capitalism is disorganized.* Without the state, capitalism would fly apart. The state is not the result of organization, it is the result of social *dis*organization.

Police Riot in Tompkins Square

The articles on this page are reprinted from the current issue of *Black Eye*, a zine published by the Anarchist Switchboard Collective in New York City. To receive the whole 36 page issue, send $1.00 to *Black Eye*, 324 E. 9th St, NY, NY 10009. *Black Eye* welcomes anti-authoritarian material of all kinds.

Coming events at the Switchboard include talks and discussions on Sept. 28 on "Problems of the Creative Personality" and on October 7 on "Freedom and Logic: A Philosophical Basis for Anarchism." On Oct. 21, Sam Dolgoff will speak on "A Proposal for the Anarchist Decentralization of Modern Technology." All events at 8 pm. For information call 212-475-8312.

By BILLY 88

A PROTEST called in response to the curfew imposed on Tompkins Square Park, held on Saturday, August 6, turned into a six-hour police riot. The blatant police brutality, captured on film, sent dozens to area hospitals and left hundreds of others with various injuries.

No police state

About 200 protestors gathered around the entrance to Tompkins on Avenue A at St. Marks at 11 pm. While local squatters handed out fliers and several people spoke on gentrification and police violence over a broken megaphone, approximately 100 cops gathered around the bandshell area surrounded by police brass, vans and horses in preparation for an attack. At 11:15 a march began that wound its way through most of the park as protestors chanted "The Park Belongs To The People" and "No More Police State." At midnight, as the crowd grew on Ave. A to about 300 persons, the police beefed up their ranks to 450 and a line of mounted police formed as tensions grew.

Side note

I would like to mention that since the crowd would grow to unknown proportions (some estimates put it at 700) and the fact that it was separated into different pockets for the remainder of the night, what follows is my personal account of the police riot and is not meant to be entirely comprehensive.

Over the fences

The NYPD, clad in riot gear and with clubs drawn, formed a wall in front of the main entrance to the park. Those inside the park encouraged those on the outside to climb "Over The Fence And Into The Park." Dozens of people including myself climbed over the chest-high fence and entered Tompkins. The wall of blue then descended on us, swinging clubs and it was back over the fence and into the street where violence quickly erupted. I want to note here that the police claim they were pelted with bottles and bricks for 15 minutes and that that is what caused the riot. A couple of bottles were tossed in their direction **after** they staged a particularly brutal arrest in full view of the large crowd. The brutality featured one cop severely restraining a young man by holding him in a headlock by sharply pushing a nightstick lengthwise against his throat. Moments after I was back on the street I met up with some nightsticks myself. A mounted cop knocked me down on the ground as three others rushed up and kicked and beat me with their clubs while one articulate officer shouted, "Get our of the neighborhood you fucking scumbag!" I live on St. Marks. Fortunately I was able to get up and run. Others were not so lucky. The most visible manifestation of the unnecessary brutality can be seen on the backs of the beaten. Captain Gerald McNamara of the ninth precinct assured the press that nightsticks were used for "defensive purposes only." Why then do so many have welts on their backs where they were struck by nightsticks? Is a person a threat when they are running away?

Up and down

After being chased up to First Ave. the crowd descended back down to Ave. A where we were greeted by two police helicopters. The crowd mocked their presence by waving to them and applauding their performance. Moments later we were once again beaten back up to First Ave. where yet another attack took place.

Bloody encounters

I spent the rest of the night on Ave. A from Sixth Street on down. The police occupied Ave. A from Ninth to Sixth Streets. No one was allowed in this area, not even residents. I witnessed two of the most violent episodes of the night about 2 am. One woman who was viciously clubbed across the eyes lay screaming in a pool of blood. The police assured that they had called EMS [Emergency Medical Service], but when her friend got tired of waiting for them, he phoned and EMS said that the police had never called them. This is typical of the cops' blatant indifference towards decency, especially on that night. I saw another man who was the unfortunate victim of the cops' violence who had his eyelid sliced open by one of NY's Finest. Outbursts of violence occurred throughout the night until dawn. At about 6 am the cops dispersed as a group of protestors marched back into the park and others made their way home.

Aftermath

The following night a march was held and on Monday there was a community meeting. Koch lifted the curfew as the NYPD is being attacked by the media and community. Coverups are sure to follow as all responsible attempt to hide and shift the blame. The issue of gentrification and the sterilization of the Lower East Side remains in every conversation. The participants in the police riot exchange stories as the media become more and more scarce. Some have filed complaints; most have not. The people understand that the park is just part of the larger problem. But the neighborhood has grown stronger, more united. There will be an attempt to have the people run the park themselves. A positive step in the right direction.□

By JOE BRAUN

ONE OF the reasons why we won the battle of Tompkins Square is that the government and the police removed their masks and showed their true colors. The lie of government of, by and for the people was exposed and it became clear that this was a case of government of the people, by the police and for the rich. Even the media could not obscure the fact that the real issues were gentrification, homelessness and police brutality. The attempts by politicians and police brass to classify the issues as noise complaints, drug dealing and radical crazies were unavailing, at least in the short run. However, the war is far from over. The lifting of the curfew is only temporary. They will surely try to reimpose it, probably during the colder months when there are less people on the streets. The reshuffling at the Police Department only means that the local command will be more experienced at crowd control and will be able to deprive us of our rights with greater finesse and expertise.

The city realizes by now that they made a serious mistake. They united us in a way which we were unable to unite ourselves. I believe that they may have learned quickly what most despots learn too late: that when government turns on the people with armed might, this only increases the people's resolve and defiance. They have already changed their tactics. As evidenced at subsequent demonstrations in Washington Square Park, the standing orders for the police are "Arrests, not beatings." From now on they will be keeping a very close watch on this neighborhood. Radical groupings will be investigated and infiltrated. Already, demonstrations are stuffed with undercover cops making a repeat of the events of August 6th almost impossible. Police have lists of perceived "leaders" and these are the people who are singled out for arrest. It seems that the media and perhaps "average citizens" are not so appalled when our rights are deprived in an orderly fashion.

In order to keep the upper hand and to keep the spotlight on the real issues, it is necessary for all of us who are involved to make detailed analyses of the events, of the role of the government/police (including their apparent concessions and anticipation of their new tactics) as well as analyzing the imperial nature of the government itself. This was only a beginning. We caught the government off guard. We should not count on this happening again.

Last March, the news came in from Minneapolis. In response to the massive mobilization of U.S. troops to Honduras, people took to the streets, erected barricades and held off the cops in one way or another for three days. The actions were carried out by a loose coalition of radicals and liberals with anarchists playing a prominent role. I was very excited but my excitement was tempered by the lament: "We have a long way to go before anything like that will happen here, in New York." I remember discussions in which it was said that New York is too large, too alienating, that radicals are too fragmented and that marxist parties such as Workers World play too large a role at demonstrations for them to take on any semblance of grassroots, popular action. Then along comes curfew at Tompkins Square and pow! Blacks, whites, Puerto Ricans, Ukrainians, liberals and radicals suddenly take to the streets in defiance of this strong-arm style encroachment on our liberty.

To me, the significance of the Tompkins Square action is that it went beyond simple protest. Usually, demonstrations are directed at symbols and consist of symbolic action. We protest at the South African Embassy because it symbolizes apartheid. The White House, Capitol Building and the Pentagon symbolize U.S. military power. Rocky Flats and other nuclear manufacturing and test sites are symbols of the war machine and when we engage in blockades and other acts of civil disobedience, our arrests are also symbolic. What made Tompkins Square different is that it was a direct action aimed not at a symbol but at a concrete manifestation of gentrification. We were not demonstrating at City Hall for more housing. We were not signing petitions and asking for a redistribution of city funds. We did not go there with the intention of getting arrested; the symbolism of people willing to martyr themselves and go to jail for their beliefs would not have been sufficient. What we did was to stand our ground on the front line and defend a piece of land against imminent takeover by the rich and their armed guards, the police.□

Dear friends in New York City,

After a period of democratization of social systems, today again we meet with an attempt to establish by the elites (owners of means of production, information, and the police) a new social order, in which there's no place for minorities, the poor, the weak, or those who disapprove of the official culture. An example of this type of gentrification is an attempt to move poor and homeless, and alternative culture people out of the Tompkins Square Park and Washington Square Park. We are against the curfew there and any violence on the side of the police. It is against the basic human and civil rights and even the official slogans about freedom and democracy declared by the U.S. We, people who live in a totalitarian country, protest against this retrogression of social life, because this makes your system similar to ours, instead of broadening freedom.

Gdańsk chapter,
Freedom and Peace (WiP)
Movement for an Alternative Society (RSA)

Contact person:
Malgorzata Tarasiewicz,
Sopot 81-747, ul. Dzierzynskiego 25/3,
510468, Poland

LETTERS

WRITE TO: GPO BOX 1288, NEW YORK, NY 10116, USA

Protests should be well thought out

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

Thanks for the report on the 1988 Toronto Anarchist Gathering. The point that "the gatherings are educational, celebratory and organizational, and sometimes these functions need to be separated" is probably a good one. It might also include the function of the day of action, also separate.

The article says "there had been no discussion about the organization of the protest," which I find unbelievable. Thirty-one people being arrested and any of them being seriously injured is bad and maybe informative news.

A protest, which has the potential or desire for confrontation with authorities, should be well thought out by its participants. Affinity groups (with members knowing and responsible to each other) and knowledge of the area and enemy's (authority's) resources are some possible preparations.

I would hate to see people frightened away from the anarchist movement because we underestimate the ferocity of the enemy.

Death to capital and its states! Long live anarchy!

Bill H.
West Nyack, NY

Phils Ochs Night in Boston

Dear Torch,

On Thursday, October 6, 1988, at 7:30 pm the New England Phil Ochs Concert Committee will present a Phil Ochs Song Night at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School Auditorium (near Harvard Square). The evening, a benefit for the People's Music Network Scholarship Fund and the Nameless Coffeehouse of Cambridge, will feature New England folk artists performing the songs of the late Phil Ochs. Singers include: Burns & Rosen, Bob Franke, Pat Humphries, Patty Huntington, Katzberg & Snyder, King & Leader, Magpie, Cindy Mangsen, and Pearne & Kreitlow. Host for the evening will be Phil's sister Sonny.

Phil Ochs was a protest singer of the '60s who wrote witty, biting songs on civil rights and the Vietnam war, as well as love songs and songs about the mysteries and sadness of the human condition. Part of a folk scene that featured Dylan and Joan Baez, Ochs achieved national recognition playing at folk clubs, college campuses, and protest rallies. Some of his many songs include "I Ain't Marchin' Anymore" and "Draft Dodger Rag."

The Phil Ochs Song Night promises to be a special evening of outstanding music and musicians and rededication to the struggle for social justice today. Seating is unreserved and tickets are $8 in advance, $10 at the door, and $5 for low-income people. To order tickets by mail, write with a stampled, self-addressed envelope to Patty Huntington, 509 Bedford Street, Lexington, MA 02173. Checks should be made payable to Phil Ochs Song Night. For further information on the concert, call Marty Blatt at 492–6259.

Marty Blatt & M. Comack
Boston

More on 'Mirth and Girth'

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

I have to disagree with William Falk's commentary regarding "Homophobia, Racism and the Image of Harold Washington."

I still think artist David Nelson painted "Mirth and Girth," showing Washington in women's underwear, mainly to get attention, not to be racist. His other paintings exhibited at the School of the Art Institute illustrated racial harmony.

I still ask: what's wrong with a painting of a man in women's underwear? As a Black gay person I was not offended by the painting; nor did I see it as necessarily a racist attack. Suppose Nelson painted Mayor Washington with a red star, implying that he was a communist; and suppose a bunch of aldermen removed the painting, called it racist, and proclaimed that Washington was a loyal supporter of the capitalist system in the U.S. and a Democrat. What's wrong with painting Harold Washington with a communist symbol?

I would strongly support the action of Black youth fighting racist whites who yell "Go back to Africa" because that's a clear-cut racist attack. But the painting isn't necessarily racist. If Nelson had painted Washington as Stepin Fechit, or Rochester, I would take offense, because these characters were obviously demeaning—and a painting of Washington in prison stripes would probably upset me.

I still think that "Mirth and Girth" shouldn't have been taken down. I think the aldermen's main purpose for that action was to preserve the image of Harold Washington as the larger-than-life Chicago heterosexual Black Messiah, and to prove their "loyalty" to his memory.

Darrell Gordon
Chicago

It's a national shame

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

What is our country going to do about the homeless people? It is real sad to see men sleeping on the streets; even worse to see little old ladies trying to dig in the garbage, gathering cardboard boxes to make a bed. It should be a national shame to have whole families sleeping in boxes and in broken-down cars.

We have families moving from city to city like refugees from a war zone. We have had no war which has burned down cities and small suburbs. Are we not the land of the free? Why is it that our own people are living like refugees? This is the same country that helps other famine-plagued, homeless people.

Why do our own people beg for food, clothing and shelter? Some of the homeless are the mentally ill where the government cut off some of the federal funds, which meant a lot of the state institutions could not afford to run the state mental hospitals without that money. So they set up some group homes for the mentally handicapped and, in the process of doing this and all the bureaucratic paperwork, some of the mentally ill just disappeared.

These are some of the people living in the streets. Some of them do not receive assistance from the welfare system. They live from street to street, from aisle to aisle, from garbage can to garbage can. They find cardboard boxes to shelter themselves from the elements. They have taken over abandoned apartments with no running water or electricity.

In New York City, the shortage of housing for low income people has produced run down hotels as temporary shelter. Mothers with their children live in hotel rooms with no kitchen facilities at all. Still the New York welfare system gives them food stamps knowing it is unlawful to cook in these rooms. Some of these hotels do not have proper fire alarms that work. Some hotels reach as far as the 15th floor. There are only one or two public telephones all the way dow on the first floor. Tell me, does this make any sense? One of the worse things ever would be for a fire to break out. Who knows, we could lose maybe a whole hotel with thousands of lives lost before something will be done.

P. Rice
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

I find this whole controversy fairly complicated. Just a couple of comments.

First, I think Billy's comment misses some of the flavor of what went on here. There was no controversy and no issue until the aldermen made their raid on the Art Institute. They seized an issue where they could huff and puff and pose as big fighters against racism, and blew the whole thing into a big deal. And half of these guys were the same aldermen who helped the white machine get a chunk of power back as soon as Harold Washington died, by putting in Mayor Sawyer! This hypocritical show was at the heart of what went on.

Billy says it is right to treat the painting as an insult, because it was placed on view in an anti-gay society. I think he has a point. But I didn't like his analogy with the shouts of "Go Back to Africa." To me, what the aldermen did was not so much like fighting back. A bigger part of what they did was as if the Black youths had grabbed the racist white by the throat and yelled, "How dare you say that to *me*? I'm not Black." And what made it a little worse is that the aldermen were too shame-faced to even acknowledge what "accusation" they were rejecting—that is, that Washington was gay.

I would like Billy's account better if there had really been a big movement of outrage in the Black community, in which the aldermen chose to intervene. Instead, the real story was a hypocritical show by a bunch of elected buffoons, reacting to a painting virtually no one would have seen or heard of, but for their antics. What outrage there was, justified or not (yes, somewhat), homophobic or not (and I think it mostly was), was a later byproduct of this silliness.

D.C.
Chicago

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In October, the facilities of the Torch/La Antorcha will be used to put out a newspaper published by the Anarchist Pentagon Blockade Contingent. This newspaper will be sent to all our subscribers in place of an October 15–November 14 issue. Our regular publication schedule resumes with the November 15 issue.

TORCH

Published by the Revolutionary Socialist League

September 15-October 14, 1988/50 ¢

Join the Anarchist Contingent at Pentagon Blockade — October 17

—U.S. Out of El Salvador!—

Below is a leaflet by a New York City committee organizing for the Anarchist Pentagon Blockade Contingent.

A BROAD COALITION of groups including CISPES and the Pledge of Resistance has called for a blockade of the Pentagon on Monday, October 17 to express outrage at the continued U.S. war against El Salvador. We, as anarchists, want to go there and join them. We're against imperialism because it's the way the government and U.S. banks and corporations extend their authority over anyone in their path. We want to stop the U.S. from running unchecked throughout the world with its death apparatus.

Right now, El Salvador is one of the U.S.'s primary targets. And that's why we're building an anarchist contingent for the Pentagon Blockade. We believe anarchists have something constructive to add. Since we feel no loyalty to any government or any authority figures we can uncompromisingly fight for freedom for all people — the people of El Salvador resisting U.S. death squads

(Continued on page 7)

Impressions of El Salvador

By DESIDERIO BOLIVAR

ABOUT two months ago, I had the opportunity to visit El Salvador, my homeland. Since I am familiar with the RSL's work in the Central America support movement and given my support of and respect for the ideas of the RSL, I would like to share my experiences of two weeks in El Salvador, a country that has been decimated by years of imperialist oppression by the

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POLISH STRIKE WAVE — FIRSTHAND REPORTS

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CA Hospital Workers Unite, Win

By GUY LOUDON

THE JOINT action of 4,000 nurses and hospital workers at seven Bay Area hospitals has won an inspiring victory over their union-bashing employer, Affiliated Hospitals. On Monday, August 15, members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 250, voted 782 to 58 to ratify a new contract after three weeks on strike. However, they remained out on strike in support of their striking sisters and brothers in the nurses' union, who had joined Local 250 workers on the line one week into the strike. On Sunday, August 28, striking members of California Nurses' Association (CNA) approved (77% for) a new contract.

Participants agree that the militant solidarity between rank and file members of both bargaining units was crucial to the outcome of their strikes. An SEIU spokesperson told *Torch/La Antorcha* that "the nurses and other workers have supported each other all along... they're really very close." In the case of the CNA nurses, this unity meant the strength to challenge their union leadership at critical points in the struggle.

Like health industry workers everywhere, members of both unions have struggled against understaffing, speedup, pay cuts, and takeaways. This spring members of both unions came together to confront management. In May, nurses and hospital workers held a joint demonstration at San Francisco General Hospital, while SEIU negotiators bargained with management inside. SEIU's contract with Affiliated Hospitals expired May 1. As negotiations collapsed, management was still talking benefit cuts and a *two year* wage freeze.

On July 26, 1,700 members of SEIU, Local 250, went on strike to maintain their health insurance and paid sick leave—the heart of management's takeaway proposal. Although CNA officials declared their union "neutral," rank and file members demonstrated their unity with the strikers. Many nurses belonging to CNA walked out in support of their fellow workers. CNA rank and

(Continued on page 6)

SECCION EN ESPANOL

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